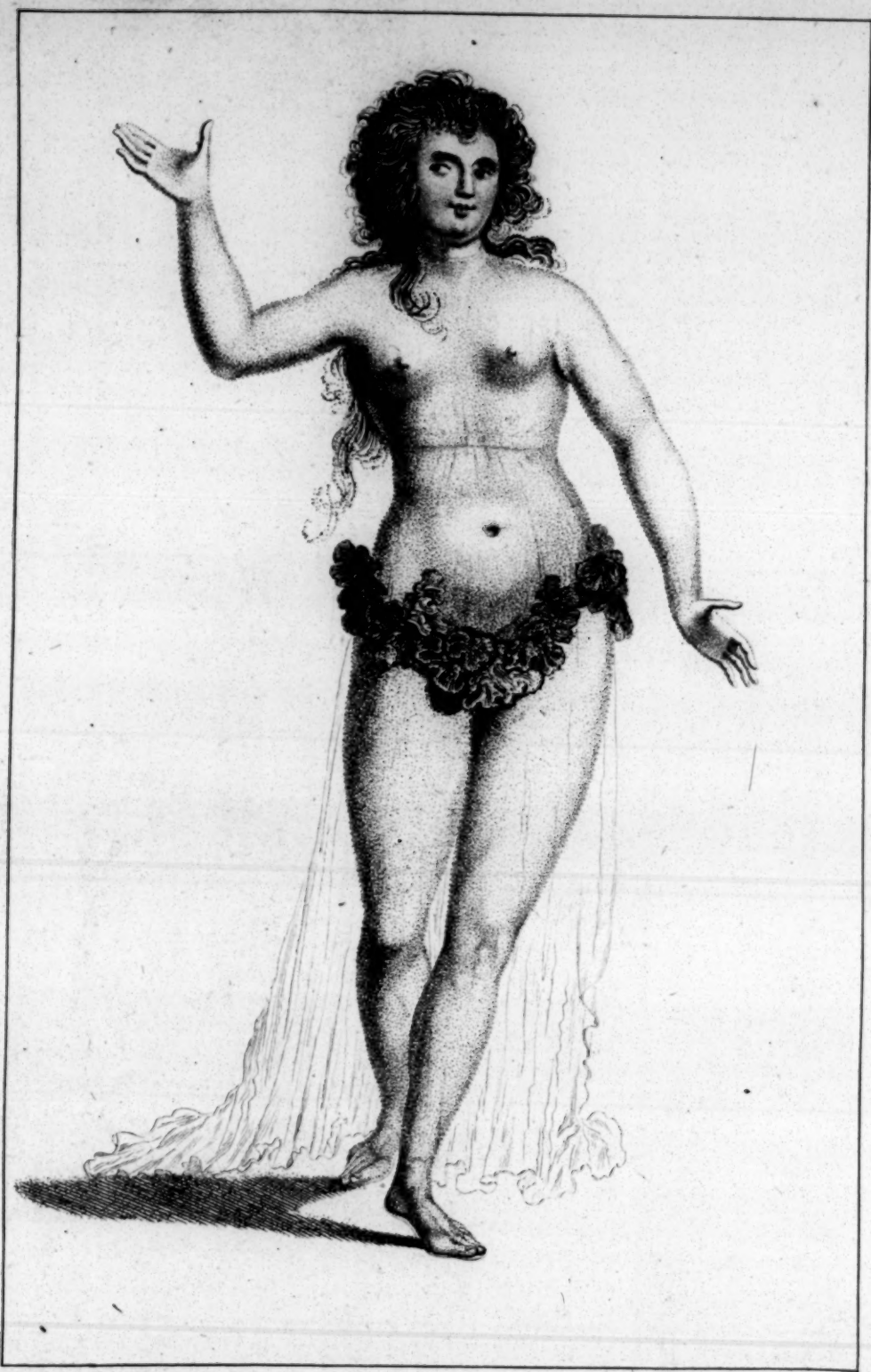




*The Dutchess of Kingston in the Dress which
She wore on her Introduction to the Empress of Russia.*





*Miss Chudleigh in the Character of Iphigenia,
at the Venetian Ambassadors Masquerade.*

THE
LIFE and MEMOIRS
OF
ELIZABETH CHUDLEIGH,
AFTERWARDS
Mrs. HERVEY and COUNTESS of BRISTOL,
COMMONLY CALLED
DUCHESS OF KINGSTON.

WRITTEN FROM
AUTHENTIC INFORMATION and ORIGINAL DOCUMENTS.

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T H E

L I F E and M E M O I R S

O F T H E

D U C H E S S O F K I N G S T O N .

IT was customary among the antient Egyptians, to try before a public tribunal, the characters of their princes and great men after death. At these trials of the dead, the living were allowed, without incurring danger from punishment or revenge, to bring forward their accusations in proof; and if the deceased was found guilty of having led a vicious, irregular, or useless life, his body was refused a place in the catacombs, the rites of burial, in a more private way; or a sentence, stigmatizing his character, was passed and entered against him upon record by the judges.

Though no such formal mode of trial exists in this country, yet the art of printing, and the liberty of the press, have established what virtually amount to the same; for in these times, not only every person eminent for rank or virtues, but all, whose characters have been remarkable, or whose genius has been distinguished in arts, sciences, and professions, as well as those whose lives have been notorious for villany, debauchery, or folly, are after their decease, brought to an ordeal, to receive judgment from public opinion; and every action is investigated and determined upon, by a scrutiny equally circumspect as that carried on against the defunct by the Egyptian jurists.

At the bar of this court stands, the character of Elizabeth Chudleigh, otherwise Hervey, late Countess of Bristol; and in the detail of her conduct through life, every anecdote shall appear with fairness and candour.—The biographer will “nothing extenuate, nor ought set down in malice;” but a true tale deliver, unbiassed by prejudice, unvarnished by partiality, and supported by the evidence of facts.

Miss Elizabeth Chudleigh, was the daughter of Colonel Thomas Chudleigh, the younger son of Sir George Chudleigh, of Ashton, in the county of Devon, baronet; a family which had long flourished in the west of England with great respect: and among her ancestors was a naval officer, who had a command in the glorious engagement, when the Spanish Armada was defeated, and a loyalist who strenuously supported his king, at the expence of his fortune, during the civil wars.

Colonel Chudleigh had a small estate in the parish of Hartford, about twelve miles from Plymouth, the remnant of his family possessions, wherein he sometimes resided; and in the mansion-house of Hall, in that parish, probably his daughter was born. This estate was, a very few years ago, in possession of the Countess of Bristol.

Miss Chudleigh's father, early in life, entered into the army; and though it does not appear, that he was ever engaged in any service that could give him an opportunity of distinguishing himself, for either courage or conduct, he died a colonel, and lieutenant-governor of Chelsea Hospital. This event happened when his daughter Elizabeth was very young, of course, the tutelage of her mind and care of her education, devolved to her mother; who having nothing to depend on, but the pension she derived as a widow from the rank her husband had held in the army, and a small salary as house-keeper of Windsor Castle, however solicitous she might be to cultivate the manners of her infant charge, she was precluded from bestowing on her those liberal accomplishments, which the daughter of a colonel generally acquires, and the grand-daughter of a baronet is entitled to.

The widow Chudleigh, on the death of her husband, finding it necessary to lay down a plan of domestic œconomy, resolved at the same time to keep up such an appearance, as would entitle her to retain those respectable connections, which she supported in the life time of her husband. For this purpose, she hired a small neat house, in a fashionable part of the town, and took in a lady as boarder and lodger; which enabled her to furnish a table in a stile of plenty, and sometimes elegance that the scantiness of her finance would not otherwise have allowed.

Elizabeth, without the instruction of masters, soon became distinguished in the circle of her mother's acquaintance. Nature had endowed her with boldness of disposition, fluency of speech, a bright fancy, and a happy turn at repartee. Her manner was admired; her *bon mots* were retailed; and her company solicited.

Among those in high life who visited at her mother's, was the celebrated Mr. Pultney, afterwards created Earl of Bath, for betraying his party, and recanting those political principles he maintained while a commoner. At this time, he was confidential friend to the Prince of Wales, and a principal leader of the opposition in parliament, countenanced by his royal highness; of course his interest was great in the court of the prince, then kept at Leicester House.

Mr. Pultney being dazzled with the bright sallies of Miss Chudleigh's conversation, and perhaps the brilliancy of her beauty, resolved to draw her from obscurity, and place her in a situation where her qualities would shine to the greatest advantage. He applied to the Princess of Wales in favour of the lady, and at the age of eighteen she was appointed maid of honour to her royal highness. This was in the year 1743.

Mr. Pultney knowing the narrowness of Miss Chudleigh's education, recommended to her in the strongest terms, sedulously to apply to the cultivation of her understanding, and undertook himself the pleasing office of a preceptor. Under his tutelage she improved considerably; their literary exercises were frequent. She read to him—he read to her; and, when separate, they constantly corresponded by letters.

This intimacy, notwithstanding the difference of ages between the parties, was not considered by all persons as being strictly platonic; for there are those who insist, that the warmth of nature must thaw the frigidity of philosophy, where frequent and close conversations are carried on between persons of different sexes, and youth and beauty is on the side of the female. Scandal, however, only whispered her suspicions: no facts were adduced to prove them, and the tittle tattle of the day was soon dissipated; which, however, was in a great measure owing to the particular notice and attention with which Miss Chudleigh was honoured by her royal patroness, and the great care her royal highness took to discountenance the reports.

Mr. Pultney's endeavours to attach his pupil to study, proved ineffectual: he never could prevail on her to undertake the fatigue of reading a large volume, so that her learning, like her understanding, was light and superficial: but though deficient in solid sense and literature, she delighted every company where she conversed, with the excursions of her imagination; and, by her vivacity, could turn the most grave and scientific discourses into subjects of laughter.

No man understood the intrinsic value of money better than Mr. Pultney: he was an adept in the art of œconomy; and, finding that avarice was among the qualities of his pupil,

pil, carefully inculcated into her mind the most certain rules of making the most of a guinea : nor was his instructions in that art thrown away ; for, though he found the head of his pupil too shallow and giddy to receive and retain the impressions of science, he was soon convinced that her heart was congenial to his own, being equally susceptible of his penurious doctrines. It was a maxim of this great senator, and apostate patriot, that a man with the price of a pot of porter in his pocket, should purchase only a pint, however extreme his thirst ; and this maxim he applied to every situation of life.

As Miss Chudleigh now moved in the hemisphere of fashionable life, it is no wonder so bright a constellation should have many satellites, and that even among these there were stars of the first magnitude. Her personal attractions were powerful ; and, among others, attached to her the Duke of Hamilton, who loved her with ardour, and persevered in his suit with such unremitting assiduity, and warmth of passion, that Miss Chudleigh, whose interest and vanity were equally concerned, in consummating a match so devoutly to be wished for, acquiesced in making a promise, that she would surrender her hand and heart, and become Duchess of Hamilton, on his grace's returning from the grand tour, which he was then about to make.

The reasons that impeded the immediate union of the lovers were indispensable : so the duke took his leave in sorrow, though not with a forboding heart ; for he parted in full confidence, that on his return, his wishes would be fully accomplished by an honourable union with the object of his love ; and this confidence was further strengthened, by a reciprocal engagement in writing, and also a mutual promise of constant correspondence by letters.

The year after Miss Chudleigh had been appointed maid of honour, being on a visit with her aunt, Mrs. Hanmer, at Mr. Merrill's, who had married her cousin, and then resided in Hampshire ; she accompanied that lady to Winchester races. Her beauty had some time before made such an impression on the Honourable Augustus John Hervey, late Earl of Bristol, then a lieutenant in the navy, that he followed her to Mr. Merrill's, and there offered her his hand. Lieutenant Hervey having been acquainted by Mrs. Hanmer, with Miss Chudleigh's attachment to the Duke of Hamilton, had not ventured to stand forward an avowed rival, but cunningly suppressed the appearance of his passion, till his grace had departed for the continent. Mrs. Hanmer was well acquainted with the manœuvres of intriguing in high life ; possessed a thorough knowledge of the female heart, and the captain having insinuated himself into her good opinion, brought her over to favour his designs on her niece. They carried on their scheme with such refined subtlety and art, that they effectually succeeded, though Miss Chudleigh had an aversion to her lover, and had executed a marriage contract to the duke, whom if she did not love, she did not dislike.

What is it a woman will not attempt in revenge for injured pride ?—Her resentment on such occasions is insurmountable !—Virtue has been abandoned—husbands dishonoured—assassinations perpetrated—when the female heart feels from being wounded by the poisoned sting of neglect !—To rouse the pride, and stimulate the resentment of Miss Chudleigh against her lover, the Duke of Hamilton, of course were the most effectual means by which Mrs. Hanmer could forward the wishes of Captain Hervey, and for this purpose she intercepted the duke's letters.

Mrs. Hanmer being confidante to her niece, was the repository of her secrets. To her Miss Chudleigh complained, from her she received advice, and by her was stimulated to resentment.—The cunning aunt searched into the very recesses of her niece's bosom, excited her to jealousy, roused her pride, and brought forth every accusation against the absent lover that invention could suggest—

On the other side Lieutenant Hervey was continually in view. His assiduities were unremitting, his complaints tender, and his professions breathed with all the warmth of a sincere passion.—Maddened by the apparent neglect of the duke—reized by the tender solicitation of Lieutenant Hervey, and incessant applications in his favour from Mrs. Hanmer,

mer, Miss Chudleigh at last consented to break the contract she had made with the Duke of Hamilton; and, by marrying, executed an irrevocable bond, which for ever precluded her from any legal or honourable connection with his grace.

The marriage ceremony was performed privately, in a chapel adjoining the house of Mr. Merrill, cousin to Mrs. Hanmer; but, strange to relate, notwithstanding the ardour of the lover, the first night was the last in which he was permitted, by the consent of his wife, to the indulgence of marital rites, and this for reasons as extraordinary as ever appeared in evidence before the sages of Doctors Commons.

The charges exhibited by Mrs. Hervey, and on which she grounded her disgust to her husband, were two.—They do not, however, appear naturally compatible with each other.—The first was imbecility on his part—the second infection from a loathsome disease, which she declared he had communicated to her; yet the lady afterwards had a child by the captain, and it is rather remarkable that a complaint on the latter charge should be made so early as the day after marriage, and from a youthful bride who must be supposed a novice in such matters. Let the faculty give an opinion on these charges—for such an opinion would certainly be required in a court of law, before a judge would venture to direct a jury to give credit to the evidence of such facts.

The bride was not, however, open in her accusations against the bridegroom, she confined them to her confidential aunt, but determined strictly to keep her resolution of never cohabiting with Mr. Hervey more; or, if possible, appearing in the character of his wife.

Having, therefore, consulted her aunt, this convenient relation undertook to prevail on Lieutenant Hervey to keep the marriage secret; and this she did not find a difficult task. There were many reasons which made it necessary. The Lieutenant feared the displeasure of his friends at so early and imprudent a match, for his bride had a very small fortune, and the principal part of her income, to which he was at that time unable to add, arising from her employment of maid of honour to the Princess of Wales, it must have been forfeited by a declaration of her marriage.

Notwithstanding the acquiescence of Lieutenant Hervey to conceal the marriage, he continued to visit his wife; but soon after, to her great satisfaction, he was ordered on an expedition to the West-Indies; from whence, after two years absence, he returned in autumn 1746, to her great mortification. After remaining at home about a month he was ordered to the Mediterranean, and arrived again in England the following January. When at home, however, he experienced from his wife every mortification that disgust and hatred could produce—He was received with frowns and melancholy gloom—his appearance distressed—his departure elevated her spirits; and yet, notwithstanding this unhappiness which so frequently obtruded upon her private hours, in public, she was the attractive centre of the fashionable circle—her vivacity and beauty rather increased than diminished after her marriage; neither sigh nor tear betrayed uneasiness of mind, and a crowd of titled and untitled beaux constantly formed her train.

Her husband, from motives which it is impossible to determine, either affected to feel or really felt uneasiness at her conduct, and the attention paid by her admirers.—Jealousy or resentment agitated his bosom, and he determined upon asserting those rights of a husband, from which his wife had taken every possible means of excluding him, that did not lead to a public disclosure of their marriage. He saw her an object of general admiration, and perhaps he admired her himself, for though the treatment he had received was sufficient to irradiate the sensations of delicate love and expel the emotions of esteem; yet appetite might still remain, and this he was determined to satisfy, perhaps as well for the gratification of sensuality, as to vindicate himself from the impeachment his wife had exhibited against his manhood.

Mrs. Hervey in vain attempted to divert her husband's resolution of enjoying hymeneal privileges. She would have negotiated by letter—he insisted upon a private interview, and answered

answered her written expostulations with an oath, swearing if she did not comply, an immediate exposure of their union should be the consequence. This threat had the desired effect, and a meeting took place at his lodgings, there being at the time no person in the house but a male negro servant.

Mr. Hervey, on the instant his wife was introduced to the apartment, wherein he received her, cut off every possibility of retreat by securing the door. A warm expostulation took place, but this proving ineffectual, the lady assumed an apparent docility of disposition, and with an apparent mild complacency consented, the Captain should convince her, that, at least, one of her charges against him was ill-founded, for in due time a boy made his appearance in the world, and the maid of honour became a mother.

Cæsar Hawkins was the confidential *accoucher* on this occasion; but as the lady had taken every precaution to conceal from the prying eyes of the courtiers, who daily surrounded her, the growing appearances of pregnancy, the wretched infant came into the world in so debilitated a state, that it soon expired, not to the regret, but to the great joy of its maternal parent.

This event took place at Chelsea, to which village Mrs. Hervey had retired, under pretence that a change of air had been advised as indispensibly necessary to her health; but on her return to Leicester-house, she found a buzzing report had prevailed, not very favourable to the reputation of a supposed maiden.—Indeed, the fact of her having been delivered of a child had, by some means, transpired, or was strongly suspected, though the particular circumstances attending its birth were unknown, and the secret of her marriage remained undivulged.

The Duke of Hamilton having finished his tour returned to his native country; and not having any suspicions of his mistress's situation, he flew to her on the wings of love. An explanation now took place; Mrs. Hanmer's duplicity was discovered, and the duke being fully satisfied that his dear Elizabeth was innocent of disloyalty to him, or a breach of her contract, immediately made her a tender of his hand.

It being impossible for Mrs. Hervey to accept the generous offer of her noble lover, and not wishing to make him acquainted with her marriage, he naturally gave credit to the scandal against her, which was now universally believed, and had come to his knowledge; and having been introduced, by the Earl of Coventry, to the family of Captain Gunning, a gentleman of Ireland, who had two beautiful daughters, one of them, whose understanding and virtue were as striking as her personal charms, captivated his heart and soon became his duchess.

The fascinating charms of Mrs. Hervey, did not suffer even by the mortification of discovering the imposition practiced on her by her aunt and husband: and his Grace of Ancafter being smitten made an offer of his heart, which was rejected: many other of the nobility and commoners of fortune experienced similar dismissions—her friends were astonished—her acquaintance wondered—her mother expostulated, and her conduct became a mystery that afforded conversation to every tea-table—for the secret of the marriage still remained undisclosed.

To free herself from importunity Mrs. Hervey determined on travelling, and chose the circle of Germany for her tour. For some time she resided at Berlin, from whence she removed to Dresden, and being perfect mistress of the French tongue her vivacity and adroitness at repartee gained her admission even to crowned heads. The King of Prussia and the Electress of Saxony conferred many favours on her, made her several rich presents, and on her departure from the continent became her correspondents; honours which were ever after continual subjects of her boasting vanity.

As she found herself so much respected and admired abroad, it is rather extraordinary she ever revisited home, at least during the life of her husband; but she panted for the pleasures of her native land, and on returning from the continent, her vanity was flattered, by repeated proofs that her charms had suffered no diminution during her absence. She continued the favourite toast of *bon ton*, the idol of the men, the envy of the women. Her suitors were numerous

numerous as ever—she breathed in an atmosphere of sighs, every butterfly of fashion hovered round her. Lord Howe, who served in the war before last in America, was the only person whom she did not repel with indifference. He had the reputation of being favoured; nay, more, of having received the last favour from the maid of honour.

Her intimacy with Lady Harrington and Miss Asher, who rioted in dissipation, gave a stamp to her character. She was constant at the midnight orgies of their pleasures, and no doubt participated in their sensual indulgencies.

The husband, irritated by her contumely, and provoked by her licentiousness, thought it a duty he owed his honour to repel the one and restrain the other, and informed her he would disclose his marriage to the Princess of Wales. The execution of this resolution his wife rendered unnecessary, she had either previously acquainted the princess with her situation; or, on the spur of the occasion had anticipated her husband's information; his intention, however, was frustrated—Mrs. Hervey was a *confidential* favourite, and was honoured with the patronage of her royal mistress to the hour of her death.

A serious quarrel having now taken place, and the lady following her own inclinations uncontrouled, she became the subject of much scandal. Her personal charms, and the situation she held in public and polite life rendered her conspicuous, and a conduct which was not marked with the strictest attention to decorum, gave birth to a variety of stories, which were industriously propagated by the busy and exaggerating tongue of calumny: though some of them may be flatly contradicted, and others deserve no greater degree of credit than is due to conjecture and probability.

Among the former may be reckoned the tale of the Somerset-house masquerade; at which it has been asserted this lady appeared in a shape of flesh-coloured silk so nicely and closely fitted to her body as to produce a perfect review of the unadorned mother of mankind, and that this fair representative of frailty, as conscious of her condition as Eve after the first act of disobedience, had contrived a method of giving as evident tokens of modesty, by binding her loins with a partial covering, or zone, of fig-leaves.

The truth is, that at this masquerade Mrs. Hervey appeared in the dress of Iphigenia, and covered such parts of her skin, as a strict conformity to the character she had assumed, with flesh-coloured silk, which, however, had at least an indelicate appearance, and induced the Princess of Wales to give her favourite a tacit reproof, by throwing a veil over her.

Another circumstance of a very extraordinary nature, which happened some time after her separation from Mr. Hervey, deserves particular notice.

A female infant was found on the stairs, leading to the apartments of Mrs. Chudleigh, in Windsor-castle, and being taken care of by that lady, as she grew up, lived with her daughter as an attendant on her person, and was called Elizabeth, by which only she was distinguished without a surname. This young woman continued with Mrs. Hervey till her death, which happened when she was about twenty; and this attachment gave rise to a report that the mistress and maid were mother and daughter.

Her dress, equipage, and expences, while maid of honour, also gave rise to numerous conjectures and speculations. For twelve years after her separation from Mr. Hervey, she not only displayed a stile of living infinitely superior to her known income, which was only six hundred pounds a year, but built elegant houses and furnished them magnificently—But from whatever sources her supplies were drawn, certain it is, that during the whole time she preserved the name of Miss Chudleigh, and held no connection with the person of Mr. Hervey. Many suppose she was supplied by royal bounty, in return for sensual favours, but of this no proof has ever appeared.

Her morning meditations, her nightly thoughts, were now employed in contriving means to procure a dissolution of the marriage bond. Lawyers were consulted, but no means could be devised except proofs of adultery against their fair client. So dangerous an experiment was of course rejected, not so much for the sin as the risque. Mr. Hervey might have sat
down

down contented—his wife could not take benefit of her own wrong and public disgrace, without relief was the probable consequence.

Time, however, brought about an opportunity, on which female ingenuity instantly seized. The parson who performed the marriage ceremony, having rested with his fathers, it appeared upon enquiry that the parish register book was not in cautious hands. An inspection was requested, for which a handsome bribe having been given, the clerk suffered himself to be amused on one side of the vestry, while Mrs. Hervey dexterously tore from the book the leaf which contained the record of her marriage, and depositing it in her bosom conveyed it home, where it was committed to the flames, never more to rise in evidence.

By this exploit Mrs. Hervey considered herself absolved from those sacred vows she had made at the altar to her husband, and at liberty to receive the addresses and the hand of the first lover she should approve: but Mr. Hervey having succeeded to the Earldom of Bristol, his rank and fortune became serious objects of acquisition, and when a succession to the family honours and revenues of her husband became probable, she seriously repented her rashness in destroying the written records of her marriage. The title and fortune were objects to her ambition and avarice, and she resolved, if possible, to re-establish her claim to both.

For this purpose, she took a journey to Mr. Merrill's, under pretence of paying that gentleman a friendly visit, but in reality to procure the re-insertion of her marriage with Mr. Hervey in the register-book; and for this purpose took with her an attorney in whom she had long confided.

The officiating clerk was easily worked upon; money was given, and promotion promised. The book was managed by the lady to her perfect satisfaction, and her spirits were so elevated on the occasion, that she opened her heart to the clergyman's wife, informed her of the birth and death of her child by Mr. Hervey; and told her, that the proof she had now obtained, might be a hundred thousand pounds in her way.

The earldom of Bristol at last descended to Mr. Hervey, and he being taken ill in the year 1759, his lady began to think of assuming her title and rank, but an event happened which again changed her mind; the Duke of Kingston at this time becoming so ardent a lover, that the lady began to look up to a situation among the nobility, and an acquisition of wealth, superior to any that had engaged her attention since her being circumvented out of the title of Duchess of Hamilton. How to obtain this honour and fortune, was now the greatest object of her meditation: she had forged new shackles—she had created new evidence against herself. Application was made to the bar—to the civilians, but no remedy could be devised.—Several years passed away, Mrs. Hervey cohabiting with the duke, under the name of Miss Chudleigh, but with such circumspection and decorum, that though there was no doubt of a sensual connection, yet no certain evidence of it ever came to light.

In 1760, the Earl of Bristol having intimated a wish for a dissolution of his marriage, was founded, by a friend of his wife's, on the subject of a divorce; but his resentment being strong, he peremptorily declared, that though he heartily repented he had ever been her husband, yet he would see her at the devil before he'd gratify her vanity, by assisting her to become a duchess: soon after, however, having become acquainted with a lady whom he wished to marry, he sent word to his wife, that he *wanted a divorce*, and she must supply the evidence.

However desirable it might be to the Countess of Bristol to become Duchess of Kingston, by dissolving the marriage bond with her lord, this was not the way that met her approbation; nor could it indeed have been propitious to her designs on her paramour, to record her own infamy in a court of law, by supplying proofs of adultery. The common lawyers and the civilians were therefore again consulted; and these ingenious gentlemen advised a cause to be instituted on the part of the lady, to set aside the Earl of Bristol's marriage claims, which were so weakly supported by his defence, the witnesses who could prove the marriage
being

being kept back, that a formal sentence of jactitation was pronounced in Doctors Commons, by which she was declared free of all matrimonial contracts, and of course, left at liberty to marry again.

Thus were the wishes of the noble lord and his countess completely gratified, but not without being attended with reports to the prejudice of both; and among others, the earl was charged with, what probably was not true, having received a very considerable pecuniary consideration for his collusion.

The definitive sentence having been pronounced in Doctors Commons, on the 10th of February 1769, on the 8th of March following, lady Bristol obtained the full accomplishment of her ambition, by being married to his Grace the Duke of Kingston.

This marriage was solemnized with the utmost magnificence; and what must appear very extraordinary indeed, favours were worn, not only by the principal nobility, but by the most illustrious personages in the kingdom, and the new duchess was received at court. During the life of the duke, a space of five years, not a doubt was promulged, or a legal step taken to impeach this marriage. The civilians, tenacious of their jurisdiction, had held that the decree of their judges was not liable to be disturbed by any extrinsic court, and the duchess rested perfectly contented under their opinions, which though certainly sanctified by an acquiescence of ages, will presently appear to have been founded in presumption, and contrary to the wise superintending power of the common law of the land.

Let us now look to the character of his Grace of Kingston, and consider it in comparison with a few traits of his duchess's disposition. The inquiry will illustrate this observation, that love is not the result of admiration from persons possessing similar dispositions, but may subsist where the parties are of minds diametrically opposite.

The duke was mild, generous, unassuming, and modest in the extreme. Ostentation he detested; and of pride he was devoid. As a husband, he blended with the ardour of love, the sincerity of friendship; and the happiness of his wife, seemed the great end of his views.

The duchess was presumptuous, vain, imperious, and passionate.—In the height of pride and insolence, she would often compare herself to Juno.—She was ostentatious to excess, yet meanly avaricious and cunning; and a dupe to the grossest flattery.

Connected with such a woman, it cannot be supposed that such a man as the Duke of Kingston could enjoy connubial happiness; but his duchess had so fascinated his mind, and obtained such despotic sway over his reason, as enabled her to turn his understanding to every measure her passions, inclinations, or caprice dictated.

At nearly the expiration of five years after his marriage, the duke was afflicted with a paralytic stroke, probably the consequence of the continual irritation, under which his nerves had suffered from matrimonial discontent. In this condition, he was hurried about by his duchess, in journies from one place to another, under pretence, that change of air would prove salutary to his health: at last, death appeared inevitable; and her grace dispatched a messenger for her solicitor, the late Mr. Field of the Temple.

Her business with this gentleman of the law was of a curious nature. The duke had made a will, by which he cut off his elder nephew, and entailed his estate upon a younger. For this will she would have substituted another, which she had prepared without the duke's knowledge, and which she desired Mr. Field to procure his grace to sign, and to witness it himself. The difference between these two wills, as they respected the duchess, was this. By the first will the duke had bequeathed the income of his estates to his duchess for life, expressly under condition of her continuing a widow; by the second will this restriction was taken away.

That a woman turned of fifty should consider restraint from matrimony a grievance, is rather extraordinary; but more particular such a woman as her grace, who considered the ceremony merely useful from its legal operation, and never considered as a religious union.

When

When Mr. Field was introduced to the duke he found his grace's intellects materially affected. A transient knowledge of his intimates and domestics were the only signs of mental ability that remained. Mr. Field, of course, remonstrated with the duchess on the danger and dishonesty of introducing a will to a man so debilitated in mind: and in return received very severe reprehension from her grace. He however quitted the house, and to his honesty and honour his client owed every thing the law afterwards allowed her to possess.

The duke having paid the debt of nature, his relict made a voyage to Italy. She visited Rome with an intention to reside there some time, and the celebrated Ganginelli then filling the papal chair, his holiness being an ecclesiastic of moderate principles and a tolerant spirit, received her grace's visit to him with the utmost cordiality, endowed her with many privileges enjoyed only by princes, and lodged her in the palace of one of the cardinals.

In gratitude for these favours, so flattering to the pride and vanity of the duchess, notwithstanding her avarice, she treated the Romans with a public spectacle. She had built an elegant yacht in England, which she had brought into Italy under the direction of a gentleman who had served in the British navy; and this vessel, with considerable labour and an immense expence, was conveyed up the Tiber. The modern Romans crowded from all parts. To the degenerated Italians an English yacht was as great a curiosity as the ancient vessels of the Carthaginians were to their renowned and virtuous ancestors: but while festivity, praise, and respect elated her heart in the dominions of the pope, a storm was gathering in the dominions of her king, to level her even to the dust.

A woman named Craddock, who, in the capacity of a servant had been present at the marriage of Mr. Hervey with Miss Chudleigh, being reduced to indigence, applied to Mr. Field, the attorney, for pecuniary relief. In vain she urged her distress, in vain she menaced a discovery of all she knew, to the relations of the Duke of Kingston; the lawyer, depending perhaps on the judgment in the Commons, set her at defiance, and she, stimulated by indigence, put her threats into execution.

For private reasons, well known to the confidential friends of the Duke of Kingston, and among which was disrespect to the duchess, his grace harboured an inveterate prejudice against Mr. Evelyn Meadows, his eldest nephew, and son to his sister Lady Frances Pierpoint. On that account he cut him off from the inheritance: and by his will, made his younger nephew his heir. To this gentleman Mrs. Craddock applied, and he joyfully received information which promised to him a restitution of what he considered his natural right.

Having minuted in writing the whole of Mrs. Craddock's evidence, and being perfectly satisfied that the facts it contained were truths, Mr. Meadows laid his case before counsel, who advised a bill of indictment to be preferred against the duchess, on a charge of bigamy.

The bill was accordingly presented, and being found by the grand jury, it was advised, if her grace did not appear in proper time to plead to the indictment, that process of outlawry should be commenced against her.

Mr. Field having received notice of the prosecution, took immediate advice of counsel, who in consultation directed information to be sent to the duchess at Rome, urging her immediate return to England. This intelligence, like the shock of a paralytic stroke, numbed every sense; her strength was scarcely able to bear against it; and she was recovered from the first paroxysms of surprise with the utmost difficulty. Reason, however, at last reassuming her seat, a carriage was ordered, and this now unhappy woman was drove to the house of Mr. Jenkins, her banker.

This Mr. Jenkins is a remarkable character. He was at one time a broker of curiosities; he is now banker to almost every British subject that visits the metropolis of the holy see. In his house the duchess had placed money and securities to a very considerable amount, for the purpose of answering such sums as she should draw for; but he being now aware of her situation, and knowing she would draw for a considerable sum to answer necessary disbursements on her journey, though perfectly secure in any advance he should make, ordered him-

self to be denied. At first his absence was imputed to a casual event, but repeated denials alarmed the duchess, who now plainly perceived a premeditated design, and justly suspected that her banker had some scheme in view militating with her interests. Her suspicion was well founded; the intent was to delay her return to England till judgment of outlawry could be obtained, the execution of which would have operated upon her property at home, though not to the advantage of her husband's relations, as the confiscations would of course have gone into his majesty's exchequer.

The duchess, alarmed by these circumstances, mustered her spirits, and resolved not only on enforcing an interview with her banker, but on obtaining a restitution of the securities she had deposited in his hands; and, having purchased a brace of pistols and loaded them, went to his house. The answer, as usual, was that Mr. Jenkins was not at home, upon which his resolute creditor placed herself at his door, declaring she would there remain centinel, and not quit her post till he made his appearance, though he should remain absent for a month.

This conduct had the desired effect. Jenkins received the information of the duchess's resolution with astonishment, and seeing the impossibility of longer avoiding an interview without absenting himself from his banking house, which he could not do without material injury to his interest and commercial credit, he at last made his appearance.

The duchess addressed him with a torrent of abuse, which he never attempted to repel, but received it with the calmness of conscious guilt, overwhelmed by shame. She demanded her money with an authoritative tone—the banker would have prevaricated—she produced her pistol and a sufficient sum was delivered.

Immediately after this act of heroism, the duchess departed from Rome, and commenced her journey to England; but before she reached the Alps, the perturbation of spirits, upon which passions and disappointments had powerfully wrought, produced a violent fever that terminated in an abscess which gathered in her side. Thus tormented in mind and body, her situation was truly pitiable; and, being unable to travel in a carriage, she slowly pursued her melancholy journey in a litter, contrived for the purpose, and in this situation reached Calais.

The abscess having matured and broken, she found considerable relief from corporeal pain; but her intellectual wretchedness rather increased, till at last her apprehensions overpowered her reason, and her conversation often indicated approaching insanity. These fears arose from a misapprehension of the consequences of the indictment. She supposed that the offence precluded her from bail, and that on her arrival she would be committed to the common gaol. Colonel West, brother to Lord Delaware, was now her confidante, but the colonel was as little acquainted with the law of bigamy as the duchess, and his opinions rather increased than diminished her apprehensions—he considered it felony without benefit of clergy.

At this time, happily for her grace's peace of mind, Earl Mansfield made a trip to France, and paid a private visit to her grace. His lordship explained to her the nature of the offence with which she stood charged, the consequences of the indictment and of conviction; and, being eased of her fears from his information, her mind became serene, her health improved, and she soon embarked for Dover.

On her arrival at Kingston-house, she discovered that neither absence nor the prosecution had lessened her friends, among the most zealous of whom she found the Dukes of Newcastle, Ancaster, and Portland; also Lord Mountstuart, and a numerous circle of other distinguished personages.

The first step was to put in bail to the indictment, which was done before Earl Mansfield, his Grace of Newcastle and Lord Mountstuart becoming her sureties, and many persons of high rank and fortune offering to join.—These voluntary acts of friendship considerably alleviated her distress; and coming from such personages, flattered her vanity, solaced her mind, and strengthened it, to meet with intrepidity the ordeal in preparation, which was the most severe, that a woman of her rank had been brought to for many years.

To

To herself, however, she had principally to impute her wretched situation, and all its consequences. Avarice had superceded prudence. She depended upon cunning and chicanery, in a case that required the utmost wisdom conducting; and instead of purchasing off the evidence against her, she applied to lawyers, whose interest it was to promote litigation.

Mrs. Craddock, the principal existing witness against her; the only one who could prove the actual performance and consummation of the marriage ceremony, had, in old age, personally solicited a decent maintenance for the remnant of her life; and had voluntarily offered, in case of acquiescence, to retire to her native village, and never more obtrude herself upon the peace of her benefactress.

This offer was rejected by the duchess, who, though wallowing in accumulating wealth, would not consent to allow Mrs. Craddock more than the wretched stipend of twenty pounds a year, and that on the hard condition that she should live sequestered in an obscure village, near the Peak of Derby.

The ungracious proposal of the duchess was rejected with contempt, but her grace, considering her conduct on the occasion as extremely liberal, expressed her astonishment by exclaiming—"Has the old devil the assurance to reject my bounty!" and she was then set at defiance; though, shortly after, Mrs. Craddock might have commanded thousands to desert from the service of the duchess's prosecutor.

Her grace now sat down to the study of jurisprudence. Her drawing-room became a law library, and not a day passed without consultations. Like Mrs. Blackacre in the comedy, she drove from the Temple to Lincoln's Inn, and from Lincoln's Inn to Doctors Commons, loaded with law cases extracted from reporters, civil institutes, and church canons. Her carriage groaned under the weight of Lord Coke, Justinian and Taylor.—From the opinions of her counsel, she daily experienced hope and consolation. The civilians produced incontrovertible arguments to prove the judgment in the Commons irrevocable. The common lawyers declared conviction impossible; and the clergy assured her, no force her enemies were capable of bringing into the field, could stand before the thundering force of the canon law.

Under these assurances, the duchess rested satisfied, that her acquittal was inevitable, and had soothed her mind into placidness, when a fresh breeze arose to disturb the calm, and create a storm in her mind.

Foote, who was then manager of the theatre in the Haymarket, considered her grace and her cause, as fair game for satire and ridicule. The public conduct of her grace afforded various subjects; and the modern Aristophanes had become master of many private transactions, as was supposed from the information of a young lady named Ponrose, who having long been deceived by her grace's promises, was forced by necessity to convert her secrets into saleable commodities, and disposed of them to Foote for a sum of money.

The satirist being thus possessed of materials, threw them into the form of a comedy, which he stiled, "*A Trip to Calais*," of which her grace was the protagonist, and her character drawn with admirable skill, but representation was not the design of the author. His view was of a mercenary nature, that promised more profit than the acting of his piece could produce; it was to extort from the duchess a considerable sum to suppress the piece from appearing on the stage, or through the medium of the press.

To effect this purpose, he contrived that the duchess should be informed, by an apparently indifferent person, of his intending to open his theatre with the new comedy; in which she was also informed, he had delineated her character to the life. The information, as intended, was like an electrical shock to her grace. She sent for Foote; he attended her with the piece in his pocket, and she solicited him to read it to her, which he obeyed.

When he had gone through a scene in which Kitty Crocodile, her representative, bore a considerable share, she found it impossible to stand the probe; pain elevated her to rage, and and rising in a fever of passion, she exclaimed, "Why, this is scandalous, Mr. Foote!—Why, what a wretch you have made me!"—The humourist, suppressing his internal satisfaction,

tion, and commanding his risible muscles into an assemblage of gravity, while his heart laughed within, answered—"You, Madam!—this is not designed for your grace!—it is not you!"

The duchess assuming a hypocritical smile, intreated the author to leave her the piece; and, he affecting the utmost candour, put it into her hand—she promising faithfully to return it the ensuing morning; and so much did her grace dislike the portrait of herself, whether drawn from nature or in caricature, that she resolved on exerting every interest in her power to prevent it from being exhibited.

To effectuate this end, she proposed the next morning to become purchaser of the copyright; but the author demanding two thousand pounds, the enormity of the sum alarmed her grace's avarice: a negociation took place for lessening it, but he refused to abate a guinea, and actually refused sixteen hundred, flattering himself no doubt, that the peculiar circumstances of the duchess's situation, would have induced her to comply with his exorbitant extortion.

In his expectations, however, he was disappointed: the duchess returned the manuscript; the author sent it to the chamberlain, and by him it was disapproved, and prohibited from representation.

In the obtaining of this prohibition, her grace again experienced the zeal and friendship of his Grace of Newcastle, whom she consulted. By his advice, she took the opinion of counsel, and the counsel were unanimous, that the comedy was a gross, false, and malicious libel; of course, they did not fail of advising a prosecution, and Blanchard the short-hand writer, was retained to take it down in case of representation.

Foote, now stung by disappointment, exerted the whole of his connections to procure a licence from the chamberlain, but that officer was not to be moved. He acknowledged the wit and humour of the performance, but was irritated at their prostitution. Indeed, the demand was little less than an attempt to rob; it was putting a libel instead of a pistol to the breast of a female, saying, deliver your money or I'll destroy your reputation. The critical situation too at which this attack was made upon the purse and character of the duchess, alarmed all her friends, and interested them in her favour. Previous to her arrival in London, from the commencement of the prosecution, every method had been adopted by her opponents to degrade her in the opinion of the public: and now that she had fairly surrendered to submit to the verdict of her peers and the judgment of law if found guilty, a mercenary literary assassin draws a poisoned dagger, to extort money or stab her fame. The conduct of those who protected her, was founded in principles of law and equity; which lay down as a maxim, that pending a prosecution, no publication shall appear to bias opinion against the culprit who is the object of it.

Foote, on receiving the Chamberlain's interdiction, sat down to expostulate, and wrote his lordship the following letter:

"MY LORD,

"I did intend troubling your lordship with an earlier address, but the day after I received your prohibiting mandate, I had the honour of a visit from Lord Mountstuart, to whose interposition I find I am indebted for your first commands, relative to "*The Trip to Calais*," by Mr. Chetwynd, and your final rejection of it by Colonel Keen.

"Lord Mountstuart has, I presume, told your lordship that he read to me those scenes to which your lordship objected, that he found them collected from general nature, and applicable to none but those, who, through consciousness, were compelled to a self application: to such minds, my lord, the whole duty of man, next to the sacred writings, is the severest satire that ever was wrote, and at the same mark, if comedy directs not her aim, her arrows are shot in the air; for by what *touches* no man, *no* man will be mended. Lord Mountstuart desired that I would suffer him to take the play with him, and let him leave it with the duchess of Kingston: he had my consent, my lord, and at the same time, an assurance that I was ready to make any alteration that her grace would suggest. Her grace saw the play, and in consequence, I saw her grace; with the result of that interview, I shall not at this time trouble your lordship.

Ship. It may, perhaps, be necessary to observe, that her grace could not discern, which your lordship, I dare say, will readily believe, a single trait in the character of Kitty Crocodile, that resembled herself.

"After this representation, your lordship will, I doubt not, permit me to enjoy the fruits of my labour; nor will you think it reasonable, because a capricious individual has taken it into her head that I have pinned her ruffles awry, that I should be punished by a poniard stuck deep in my heart: your lordship has too much candour and justice to be the instrument of so violent and ill-directed a blow.

"Your lordship's determination is not only of the greatest importance to me now, but must inevitably decide my fate for the future; as, after this defeat, it will be impossible for me to muster up courage enough to face folly again: between the muse and the magistrate there is a natural confederacy; what the last cannot punish the first often corrects; but when she finds herself not only deserted by her antient ally, but sees him armed in the defence of her foe, she has nothing left but a speedy retreat: adieu then, my lord, to the stage. *Valeat res ludicra*, to which, I hope, I may with justice add *plaudite*, as during my continuance in the service of the public, I never profited by flattering their passions, or falling in with their humours, as upon all occasions I have exerted my little powers, as indeed I thought it my duty, in exposing follies, however much the favourite of the day, and pernicious prejudices however protected and popular. This, my lord, has been done, if those may be believed who have the best right to know, sometimes with success; let me add too, that in doing this I never lost my credit with the public, because they knew that I proceeded upon principle, that I disdained being either the echo or the instrument of any man, however exalted his station, and that I never received reward or protection from any other hands than their own.

"I have the honour to be, &c.

"SAM. FOOTE."

Notwithstanding the independent spirit breathed in this letter, even the admirers and friends of the writer must allow, that he acted with meanness and duplicity; and when hard run, and forced to enter into a defence of his conduct to the duchess, with a wretched pusillanimity denied that he ever had made so exorbitant a demand as two thousand pounds for the suppression of the piece. But unhappily for the character of his veracity, the reverend Mr. Foster, a clergyman of respectability, considerably advanced in years, and who had, through life, mingled with the great world, came voluntarily forward and made an affidavit of the following facts—"That in consequence of the threat to perform *The Trip to Calais*, he had waited on Mr. Foote, and remonstrated with him on the extreme barbarity of such an attack at such a particular juncture: that Mr. Foote had only agreed to suppress the piece, on condition of his receiving from the duchess the sum of two thousand pounds."

Foote's letter to the chamberlain having no effect in procuring the licence for acting he determined to recommence his attack on the duchess, by threatening her with a publication of the piece, and a fresh negotiation for extorting hush money was commenced.

It was now intimated, that though precluded from performing his comedy on the stage, the press was still open to him, and he had it in his power to publish; but if his expences were reimbursed, and the sum which her grace had formerly offered him paid, he would desist, and the copy should be destroyed.

On this intimation the duchess consulted her friends; but, as was generally the case, with a predetermination to follow her own opinion. The persons to whom she applied were the late Earl of Peterborough, Doctor Isaac Schomberg, remarkable for having been pillored for a libel against the present government, the reverend Mr. Foster, and Mr. Field, her solicitor. These gentlemen she found all held the same opinion, reprobating Foote's demand as an extortion, which to comply with would be folly, by admitting the application of the satire; and Schomberg declared, that "although he had been many years intimate with Foote, and had spent some of the pleasantest hours of his life in his company, yet he would tell him to his face, as a man, that he deserved to lose his life for such an attempt—it was more ignoble than the conduct of a highwayman."

This union of opinion had considerable weight with the duchess, yet she still dreaded the pen of her antagonist, and herself unable to support a literary contest, she called to her aid a clergyman, named J——n, who was well experienced in all the manœuvres of new-

paper contests; a man also of a bold spirit, not remarkably strict in attention to the character of his function, and who, though neither a wit, a humourist, nor a satyrift, yet was master of a strong vindictive stile, and wrote with a tolerable share of asperity.

The opinion of this gentleman being demanded, it coincided exactly with the judgment of those who had been before consulted. He advised that instead of complying, the duchess should obtain complete evidence of the menace and demand, and then advise with counsel on the proper mode of prosecuting the extortioner; which advice being pleasing to all parties, and urged by the Duke of Ancafter, as necessary to be put into immediate execution, Mr. J——n was appointed to call on Foote for the purpose of collecting the necessary evidence.

An interview being obtained at Foote's house—the parson informed the player, that he had waited on him as a friend from the Duchess of Kingston, and requested an answer to this question, “Whether Mr. Foote intended to publish the piece which the chamberlain had prohibited, called *A Trip to Calais*?”

Foote proceeding with a long detail of the vast expence which had been incurred by preparing the comedy for representation, on which J——n interrupted him, by observing, that if he supposed the whole, or even the most minute part of his expence would be reimbursed by the duchess, he was mistaken, for she was determined, by the advice of her friends, not to give him a single guinea.

Foote endeavoured to put this off by a laugh, and instead of making any positive answer to the parson's question, produced the letter he had sent to the chamberlain, which we have already stated and requested his visitant would attend to the reading of it. The requisition being complied with, and the auditor having paid many compliments to the wit and humour of the reader, again pressed for an answer to his original question; when Foote, at last, said, or rather exclaimed, “O! I shall certainly publish the piece, unless the duchess will consider the heavy loss I should sustain;” and added, “Why the devil does Isaac Schomberg interfere? We should hunt down these reps of quality in couples; besides, lady Kitty Crocodile will suit nine out of ten widows of fashion in the kingdom. Their damned tears are like a shower in sun-shine, refreshing their weeds and making their faces look the brighter.”

J——n considering he had now received an answer to his question sufficient to qualify him as witness against Foote, was about to retire, when Foote clapped him on the shoulder, and said, “What, and so I am to be attacked if I publish ‘*The Trip to Calais*,’ an intimation which a good deal surprised J——n, as it convinced him that Foote must have some friend in the duchess's house, her grace having determined upon libelling her enemy, and J——n being the person who was to officiate as her literary friend in the business. However, recovering from his surprise, he answered, “The publication will be an attack from you, Mr. Foote; the effect of which I, as the friend of the duchess, will do my utmost to prevent.”

Foote dreading a paper war, and knowing that his adversary, J——n, had the command of a newspaper, through which he could daily attack him with impunity, considered it prudent to bring about a compromise, and for that purpose wrote the following letter to the duchess:—

To her GRACE the DUCHESS of KINGSTON.

“MADAM,

“A MEMBER of the privy council, and a friend of your grace's; (he has begged me not to mention his name) but I suppose your grace will guess at him, has just left me; he has explained to me what I did not conceive, that the publication of the scenes in the *Trip to Calais*, at this juncture, with the dedication and preface, might be of infinite ill consequence to your affairs.

“I really, Madam, wish you no ill, and should be sorry to do you an injury.

“I there-

"I therefore give up to that consideration what neither your grace's offers; nor the threats of your agents could obtain; the scenes shall not be published, nor shall any thing appear at my theatre, or from me, that can hurt you; provided the attacks made on me in the newspapers do not make it necessary for me to act in defence of myself.

"Your grace will therefore see the necessity of giving proper directions.

"I have the honour to be

"Your most devoted servant,

North-End, Sunday, August 13, 1775.

"SAM. FOOTE."

It is evident from this letter that Foote stood in awe of the newspapers, that he dreaded being squibbed through their medium, and that he knew the Duchess of Kingston had engaged agents for that purpose. Of course this epistolary harbinger to reconciliation gave her grace infinite satisfaction. It discovered the vulnerable part of her enemy—the anticipated triumph from his fears—she resolved immediately to commence hostilities, and instantly dispatched an aid de camp, for Lieutenant General Parson J——n.

On the parson's arrival he found the duchess all extacy—she produced the letter with an elevation of pride and joy—it was a trophy torn from the foe, and to the parson she imputed the glory and honour of the deed. Her praises on her ecclesiastical champion, her church militant ally, were lavish, and she insisted on his giving Foote's letter an answer in her name, and publishing both in the newspapers.

Mr. J——n has declared, that he declined at first, and long argued on the impropriety of a newspaper contest, as beneath the dignity of her station; she was, however, peremptory, and J——n at last wrote the following answer:

To Mr. FOOTE.

"SIR,

"I was at dinner when I received your ill-judged letter. As there is little consideration required I shall sacrifice a moment to answer it.

"A member of your privy council can never hope to be of a lady's cabinet.

"I know too well what is due to my own dignity, to enter into a compromise with an extortionable assassin of private reputation. If I before abhorred you for your slander, I now despise you for your concessions; it is a proof of the illiberality of your satire, when you can publish or suppress it as best suits the needy convenience of your purse. You first had the cowardly baseness to draw the sword, and, if I sheath it, until I make you crouch like the subservient vassal, as you are, then is there not spirit in an injured woman, nor meanness in a slanderous buffoon.

"To a man, my sex alone would have screened me from attack; but I am writing to the descendant of a merry Andrew, and prostitute the term of manhood by applying it to Mr. Foote.

"Cloathed in innocence as in a coat of mail, I am proof against an host of foes; and conscious of never having intentionally offended a single individual, I doubt not but a brave and generous public will protect me from the malevolence of a theatrical assassin. You shall have cause to remember, that though I would have given liberally for the relief of your necessities, I scorn to be bullied into a purchase of your silence.

"There is something, however, in your pity at which my nature revolts. To make me an offer of pity, at once betrays your insolence and your vanity. I will keep the pity you send until the morning before you are turned off, when I will return it by a Cupid, with a box of lip salve, and a choir of choristers shall chaunt a stave to your requiem.

"E. KINGSTON."

Kingston House, Sunday 13th August.

"P. S. You would have received this sooner, but the servant has been a long time writing it."

Whether Foote was pleased or mortified at this letter is hard to determine. Having given up every pecuniary view, he could have felt no regret on that account, and this dull epistle, appearing before the public, with her grace's signature, served as a whetstone to sharpen his wit and satire, as will appear by the polish and keenness of the reply—which was

To

To the DUCHESS of KINGSTON.

"MADAM,

"THOUGH I have neither time nor inclination to answer the illiberal attacks of your agents, yet a public correspondence with your grace is too great an honour for me to decline. I can't help thinking but it would have been prudent in your grace to have answered my letter before dinner, or at least postponed it to the cool hour of the morning: you would then have found that I had voluntarily granted that request which you had endeavoured, by so many different ways, to obtain.

"Lord Mountstuart, for whose amiable qualities I have the highest respect, and whose name your agents first very unnecessarily produced to the public, must recollect, when I had the honour to meet him at Kingston-house, by your grace's appointment, that instead of begging relief from your charity, I rejected your splendid offers to suppress "The Trip to Calais," with the contempt they deserved. Indeed, Madam, the humanity of my royal and benevolent master, and the public protection, have placed me much above the reach of your bounty.

"But why, Madam, put on your coat of mail against me? I have no hostile intentions. Folly, not vice, is the game I pursue. In those scenes which you so unaccountably apply to yourself, you must observe, that there is not the slightest hint at the little incidents of your life, which have excited the curiosity of the Grand Inquest for the county of Middlesex. I am happy, Madam, however, to hear that your robe of innocence is in such perfect repair; I was afraid it might have been a little the worse for the wearing; may it hold out to keep you warm the next winter.

"The progenitors your grace has done me the honour to give me, are, I presume, merely metaphorical persons, and to be considered as the authors of my muse, and not of my manhood: a merry Andrew and a prostitute are no bad poetical parents, especially for a writer of plays; the first to give the humour and mirth, the last to furnish the graces and powers of attraction. Prostitutes and players too must live by pleasing the public; not but your grace may have heard of ladies, who, by private practice, have accumulated amazing great fortunes. If you mean that I really owe my birth to that pleasant connection, your grace is grossly deceived. My father was, in truth, a very useful magistrate and respectable country gentleman, as the whole county of Cornwall will tell you. My mother, the daughter of Sir Edward Goodere, Bart. who represented the county of Hereford; her fortune was large, and her morals irreproachable, till your grace condescended to stain them; she was upwards of fourscore years old when she died, and, what will surprise your grace, was never married but once in her life. I am obliged to your grace for your intended present on the day, as you politely express it, when I am to be turned off. But where will your grace get the Cupid to bring me the lip-salve? That family, I am afraid, has long quitted your service.

"Pray, Madam, is not J——n the name of your female confidential secretary? and is not she generally clothed in black petticoats made out of your weeds.

'So mourn'd the dame of Ephesus her love.'

"I fancy your grace took the hint when you last resided at Rome; you heard there, I suppose, of a certain Joan who was once elected a pope, and, in humble imitation, have converted a pious parson into a chambermaid. The scheme is new in the country, and has doubtless its particular pleasures. That you may never want the benefit of the clergy in every emergency, is the sincere wish of

"Your grace's most devoted,

"And obliged humble servant,

"SAM. FOOTE."

While her grace was thus ill-advisedly indulging her caprice and malice; while she was thus amusing the public with a farce in which she made a conspicuous and ridiculous figure, as the principal character, her folly retorted upon herself. In wit, humour and satire, Foote had every advantage over her, and her literary assistants, who now crowded the prints with anonymous squibs and paragraphs reflecting on his character, but which, instead of serving their patron, betrayed their own insufficiency, the weakness of her head, and malevolence of her heart. Every anecdote of her life was brought forward, and many, even innocent transactions, were aggravated into offences; she sought calumny and she felt the poison of her sting, and this at a time when she should have studiously avoided every step that could have incurred censure, and have sedulously solicited every means of obtaining popularity.

Mr. Evelyn Meadows no doubt rejoiced in her conduct, and took every possible measure to insure her conviction: nor was she idle in making necessary preparation for her trial, or in the adoption of measures which would prevent her appearance at the bar of public justice.

Though

Though in private her conversation gave evident proof of severe internal feelings, she publicly affected to be at perfect ease, and strongly expressed her desire, of having the trial accelerated. But whatever those feelings were, Lord Mansfield in his conference with her grace at Calais, having entirely removed her principal apprehensions, the loss of fortune, and suffering a corporal punishment for her offence if convicted, it may be supposed from her conduct, that her fame, which was the only object in danger, held a very subordinate place in her estimation, perhaps from consciousness that being already alloyed beneath current value, it was no longer worthy of attention.

With those in power, it was certainly a wish that her grace would accommodate with the prosecutor. The certain expence and trouble were objects to administration; and an opportunity offered which folly only would not have embraced; an opportunity by which this rash and misguided woman had it in her power to prevent that impending disgrace, which, like the sword of Democles, hung over her head, suspended by a hair, threatening to fall and wound her to the heart.

Earl Mansfield continued, at least apparently, her friend; and whether from regard to her, or consideration for the public, on whom an immense expence must ultimately fall, from the necessary disbursements of the treasury to defray the costs of the trial, his lordship having previously consulted many of his brother peers, delivered his sentiments on the occasion in the House of Lords, in which he said—"The arguments about the place of trial, suggest to my mind a question about the propriety of any trial at all. *Cui Bono* what utility is to be obtained? Suppose a conviction be the result—the lady makes your lordships a curtley, and you return a bow."

This observation coming from the lord chief justice of the King's Bench, the first law officer of the kingdom, who from situation was in the secrets, and master of the measures of the sovereign and the cabinet, though strongly opposed by Lord Chancellor Bathurst, yet had a considerable effect on the spirits of the prosecutors. They justly dreaded his lordship's influence, and legal doctrines, and, on very reasonable grounds, apprehended, that his lordship would have procured the exertion of royal prerogative, or some other means, to defeat their ends.—They knew, that public convenience was an argument of great weight with his lordship; and had often, in the King's Bench, over-ruled the maxims of common law.

This was the time for the duchess to disengage herself from the labyrinth of difficulties which she had raised.—A private intimation was conveyed to her, that ten thousand pounds would satisfy every demand, and terminate the prosecution. An authoritative proposal followed, and the duchess was strenuously intreated by her zealous and sincere friends, immediately to close with the offer of her opponents, but weak and interested advice prevailed.—The subtilty of legal reason superceded the candour of common sense; a negative answer, couched in terms of contempt was returned, and of course resentment was irritated into persevering revenge, by this improper instance of contumely.

Her counsel were all of one opinion, every argument terminated with an assurance that she had nothing to fear from the prosecution. Sergeant Davy had been of a different opinion. He had publicly declared, that "the case lay in a nutshell, and the culprit must inevitably be convicted;" yet being introduced to Kingston-house, by a retainer of twenty pounds, and twenty pounds for every visit, the arguments of his brethren of the coif and long robe wrought conviction on his mind, as appears by the following anecdote.—Being at the duchess's table, in company with Lord Peterborough, her grace received a letter from her leading counsel, Mr. Wallace, then at Bath. The contents produced an immediate elevation of her spirits, which, notwithstanding a free circulation of burgundy and champagne, had been remarkably heavy that day; and in tones of rapture she communicated the cause to the company, adding, "my heart is now at rest; Mr. Wallace wishes for the trial that he may give me joy of a triumph!" "Why," exclaimed Sergeant Davy, striking his ponderous hand upon the

the table, with force that set the glasses ginging, "if my friend Wallace knows your grace's case as well as I do, he will, I am confident, agree with me in opinion. I will forfeit my right hand as a man, and my reputation as a lawyer, if your grace has not less than nothing to fear!"—The Earl of Peterborough, astonished at this instance of professional meanness and pliability, enquired of Parson Jackson, "if he could account for the learned sergent's conversion;" on which the divine pointed to a written order for a side of venison and some dozens of old Madeira, which were to be sent to the sergent's house, "and these," he said, "with the fees in hand, and those in expectation, were the arguments which had made a proselyte of brother Davy.

Under these assurances of defeating her enemies and triumphing in an honourable acquittal by the judgment of her peers, the duchess was betrayed into confidence, and assumed a vivacity inconsistent with her situation. Another event also combined to produce hilarity in her mind. The Princess Electorate of Saxony, with whom she had been personally intimate on the continent, and who occasionally corresponded with her, sent her a letter on the present occasion, reprobating the conduct of her prosecutors, condoling with her sufferings, and pressing her to accept an invitation at her court; where she promised every protection and comfort that her power, interest and friendship could produce. This epistle, with another of a few lines from the Prussian monarch, the deluded duchess displayed in every company, with all the arrogance of pride, and ostentation of vanity: declaring at the same time, that she must decline the friendly proffers of her good friends the king and princess, being under the absolute necessity of undertaking a journey to Rome, on special business with his holiness Pope Ganginelli.

But notwithstanding the flattering hopes with which she indulged and deceived her mind, and the visible measures she took to expedite her trial, she still continued to exercise that cunning which had so repeatedly plunged her into difficulties: for at the very time that her petition lay before the Lords, praying for the privilege of a peeress, and a speedy trial before their lordships, she was busily employed in a scheme to entrap Mrs. Craddock into a private interview, that she might prevail on her to quit the kingdom.

To consummate this design a near relation of Mrs. Craddock's was applied to by one of the duchess's agents; who engaged, on promise of reward, to procure the desired interview; it being agreed however that the duchess should attend in disguise, and not be known till she chose to disclose herself. The duchess accordingly attended at the appointed place in man's apparel, but neither Mrs. Craddock nor her friend appeared; and for this reason, they had betrayed the whole scheme to the opposite party.

The indictment having been removed into the High Court of Parliament, the trial of the duchess came on upon Monday the 15th day of April, 1776: when the prisoner, after the usual formalities, having been placed at the bar, the Lord High Steward addressed her in a short speech.

He pointed out the nature of the crime whereof she stood indicted; the fatal consequences thereof, in respect to domestic peace, morality and public society; how detestable in the eye of the Omnipotent; and how far it behoved her to prove her innocence. He added, that he considered it his duty to acquaint her how odious this offence appeared in the eye of the law; as formerly it was punished with death, though at present it was only a felony within the benefit of clergy. The rigour of the sentence was of course relaxed in favour of all offenders; and that part which remained in force on ordinary occasions was remitted by express statute to persons of her rank. He also acquainted her, that innocence alone could protect, as no plea to the jurisdiction of the court could now avail, she having foregone any benefit she might heretofore have derived from any informality, by removing the trial by petition *herself* before the peers in parliament.

He also informed her grace, that if she required any information respecting the mode of proceeding, any question she proposed upon that ground would be readily answered: and

and that when either herself or her counsel addressed the court, they were to address their lordships in general, and not any one in particular. And concluded by assuring her, that awful as her situation was, she had to support her under the weight of it, the reflexion of having the truth of her case investigated, before the most honourable and impartial tribunal that any country could boast.

The prisoner in answer to the Lord High Steward, asserted her innocence, denying the offence laid to her charge, and asserting that she felt no fears from any other cause than that of appearing before so awful a tribunal. She begged, that if she failed in the performance of any ceremonial or respect due to the court, it might be imputed to the real cause, her distressed situation, and not misconstrued into any inattention to an assembly the most dignified and honourable in the world: to appear before which she had travelled, in a litter from Rome, though afflicted at the same time with a severe and dangerous illness—but she knew her judges—and she knew her life, her honour, and her fortune could not be placed in any hands so just and sacred.

The prisoner then informed the Lord High Steward, that she was advised by counsel to plead the sentence of the ecclesiastical court, in bar to her being put upon her trial, but being informed by his lordship that she must plead to the indictment, she accordingly pleaded, not guilty.

Mr. Dunning opened the prosecution on behalf of the crown, and the attorney-general having spoken on the same side, Mr. Wallace, as counsel for her grace, contended that the record she had produced, being an authenticated copy of a sentence of the Ecclesiastical Court, in the year 1768, previous to her marriage with the Duke of Kingston, was a good plea in bar to the indictment. The principal point he argued on was, that the sentence by which her marriage with Mr. Hervey was rendered void, was matter of record of a court that had competent jurisdiction to decide upon suits on matrimonial espousals.

The attorney general requested the whole proceedings, on which the sentence of the ecclesiastical court was founded, to be read.

Mr. Wallace answered, that the duchess was legally justified in insisting on the plea as a matter of record, and that the court could not regularly take cognizance of the proceedings of the ecclesiastical court previous to the sentence.

The attorney general, in his rejoinder, observed that the plea and argument founded on it admitted of two explanations. On the one hand it was a legal plea of matter of record, and therefore pleaded in bar of the indictment; on the other it must be a plea of justification, respecting the merits of the matter in issue; that is, whether the prisoner was or was not married. If their lordships, he observed, determined to admit the plea, as a mere plea in bar, then the matter was terminated; but if it was a plea on the general issue, he did not think it could be admitted without inquiring into the special matter, on which the sentence was founded. In this case he imagined their lordships must hear the whole process of the ecclesiastical court.

These papers were accordingly read; the contents of which were an allegation on one side, that the duchess of Kingston, when Miss Chudleigh was in the year 1743, appointed maid of honour to the then Princess of Wales; that being then under age, she married in the year 1744, Mr. Hervey, who was then a lieutenant in the navy; that in a short time after he was called abroad, and that they never after cohabited together, looking upon the ceremony not valid, the parties being under age; that she ever after considered herself as a single woman, and continued as maid of honour to the Princess Dowager of Wales, down to the year 1764. On the other hand, it was alleged that they were married at Laneston in 1744, that they lived together for some time, and kept house in Conduit-street, where they passed for man and wife, and were visited as such. Mr. Hervey, it is true, went abroad as lieutenant in the navy in 1746; but returned the ensuing year, and again lived with the duchess as her husband.

Mr.

Mr. Wallace then spoke in support of the plea, with respect to the sentence of the ecclesiastical court, which in substance pronounced that Miss Chudleigh was and is a spinster; and so far as she was to be connected with Mr. Hervey, she has always been a single woman. That the ecclesiastical court had a competent jurisdiction to decide in all matters relative to matrimony. There was but one law in being which broke in upon its jurisdiction, and brought the rights of matrimony before the temporal courts; and that so far as a power of judging of the act as a matter of moral turpitude, the jurisdiction of the ecclesiastical court was as entire and decisive as if the act of James I. had never passed.

The crime of polygamy was not rendered more immoral or more odious in any light, than before the passing of that act. It was made a temporal offence merely for political purposes; yet so careful were the framers of that law not to invade or intrench on the jurisdiction of the ecclesiastical court, that they left the law in every other respect as they found it, but in one instance, that of annexing a temporal punishment to an offence hitherto only cognizable and punishable in a spiritual court. The framers of the law were not even satisfied with leaving the matter loose and undefined, to the discretion of the common law courts; but they specially provided, by two exceptions in the statute, that nothing in it should be construed to affect the competency of the ecclesiastical court, as to prevent it to decide in offences and complaints against the rights of marriage. The first of those exceptions reserved the power to the ecclesiastical court, to determine matters of divorce, *a vinculo matrimonii, & a mensa & thoro causa adulterii*; and the other where the parties were within the age of consent. If any doubt could remain that the statute meant to leave the ecclesiastical law just as it was found, those two exceptions contained the most irrefragable evidence of the true intention of the law-makers, that nothing more was designed by the promoters of this statute, than to annex a temporal punishment to a crime, the commission of which had hitherto brought after it nothing more than a spiritual censure, or created certain incapacities in the persons convicted in the ecclesiastical courts. He cited several cases, as well before as since the statute of James I. and which were deemed valid and conclusive, even in the temporal courts, and said there did not exist a single precedent in the books, either directly or by analogy, sufficient to maintain the present prosecution. Amongst others, he cited the cases of Hatfield and Hatfield, Jones and Bew, Penn and Bond, &c. He said he was aware of an objection that would be started to the cases cited, because they related immediately to civil causes; but the well known case reported in Carthew, and afterwards mentioned in Strange and Viner, as the precedent on which other cases of a similar nature were determined, was a case full in point, and completely covered and sustained the plea now tendered by his client. It went beyond the present, because it was a plea in bar to an indictment on a capital offence, namely forgery. It was against an express statute in which there was no exception, as in that on which the lady was indicted; and it was, besides, accompanied with circumstances of the most gross and daring fraud and imposition. It was the case of a person who had forged a will, and obtained a probate and letter of administration. The forgery was afterwards detected, and the person who committed the crime was indicted for it, yet the *probate as matter of record*, was pleaded in bar, the court held, as it had been granted by a court which had competent jurisdiction, the probate should have been first set aside, as obtained by fraud, before the prisoner could be tried for the offence, in consequence whereof the offender was not punished.

Mr. Mansfield argued upon the same ground; cited several cases in point, from the year books, &c. &c. one of which had been determined by their lordships.

Dr. Galvert also supported the plea.

Dr. Wynne cited more than twenty different cases to support the plea, defying his opponents to prove that the sentence of the ecclesiastical court had ever been set aside respecting a marriage case. He concluded, "that if a corrupt or mistaken sentence had been given, the law had provided a remedy, by giving the party, who judged himself aggrieved, a right of

of appeal; but if either on the appeal the former sentence was confirmed, or the party neglected to bring it in due time, the sentence was conclusive and decisive of the matter in issue, and could never be legally questioned, nor the cause again be renewed in any other form."

The attorney general now entered upon his objections to the plea tendered in bar of the indictment.

He observed that the sentence of the ecclesiastical court was pleaded as a matter of record, amounting in effect to a formal acquittal; if, therefore, it could not be received in that form, it could be received in no other. This he contended could not be the case, unless the cause of jactitation was in the nature of a criminal prosecution, and the sentence on that cause an acquittal by the country. Neither of those would, he presumed, be pretended; for allowing the plea to be good on the general issue as making part of the lady's defence, it was impossible that it could amount to a plea in bar, unless on the ground that the lady had been tried in the manner and form provided in the statute, which must be on the matter arising out of the record of the indictment, by her country or her peers. For his part, therefore, be the event of the trial what it might, as to the sentence of the ecclesiastical court, to shew that the prisoner was really a single woman on her espousals with the late Duke of Kingston, he could not possibly conceive how the plea now tendered, which was a virtual confession of the guilt, could legally operate as a proof of her innocence. The circumstances attending the nature of the plea, still increased the absurdity of insisting on it, and greatly aggravated the offence; for it not only owned the crime charged in the indictment, but claimed the protection of the court, on the ground that the plea had been obtained by collusion, fraud, and deceit.

But so far from the sentence of the ecclesiastical court amounting to a trial or acquittal, he contended it was no sentence at all; for, in every sentence there must be *res adjudicata* the matter must be solemnly determined and finally adjudged. Would any man say, that that was the case in the present instance? Might not any man who pleased, bring the same matter in the same form, before the same court, the very next day after the sentence had been pronounced; Might not the same ground be again travelled over? Might not persons who were strangers to the parties, for their amusement, bring a cause of jactitation, and obtain a similar, or a different sentence in the very same cause? Did not the learned civilians who supported the plea, urge the consequences here stated, in proof of the power of the ecclesiastical court, and the means provided by it, for dispensing substantial justice? If, then, this very cause could be revived again, by appeal before the same jurisdiction, or be brought before the court in the same form, how in the name of law or common sense, could a sentence that was not binding on the parties, even in a civil sense, which, in fact, decided or determined nothing effectually, be said to amount in law to a record of acquittal, in order to bar a trial on a charge supported by a criminal accusation? Taking up the matter then in the way it was argued by the learned civilians, there was a *res adjudicata*, the matter in issue was adjudged, or it was not. If it was adjudged, what came of all that profound stock of learning, displayed to shew that the matter was subject to renewal, or revival, at the option of the original parties; or any other, who, for curiosity or amusement, thought it worth their while; If it was not adjudged, which he contended it was not, then there was at once an end of every argument raised and conclusion drawn, on the supposition that the matter was *res adjudicata*, when in fact it was not.

He then proceeded to consider the plea in bar of the indictment in two lights. First, in relation to its admissibility, and next as to its competency.

On the head of admissibility he contended, that it was to the last degree absurd, because it denied the jurisdiction of the lords to enquire into the truth of the charge, while it was evident it was matter of public notoriety that it was the lady herself who appealed to their lord-

ships in parliament, and thereby recognized and acknowledged the authority of that jurisdiction which she now objected to as incompetent.

He then examined several of the cases cited on the other side. The most of those he endeavoured to shew were inapplicable to the matter under consideration, and such of them as carried about them any appearance of weight or plausibility were peculiarly distinguished from the present case, because they were made binding on the parties who had acted fraudulently or under covin, and were not made binding, nor did not conclude a third party. If in some instances a third party was bound, that is, a person who had no direct hand in the fraud, such persons having derived an interest as the representatives of one or other of the original parties, made the case different: all that had happened here was purely the work of the prisoner and Mr. Hervey: it therefore followed, from an established principle in our law, that whatever might have been transacted by them, could never, in operation of law, or by any equitable or legal construction of it, defeat the right of those who derived no claim of representation or otherwise under either of the parties. He also replied to the cases cited by the opposite counsel, in a masterly manner.

Mr. Solicitor-General maintained the same doctrine; Mr. Dunning followed him; and Dr. Harris completed the arguments on the side of the prosecution.

Mr. Wallace was then called upon to make a replication in behalf of the duchess; and took a review of the whole matter, and threw many new lights upon it.

He was followed by Dr. Calvert on the same side.

The arguments of counsel being concluded, the lords adjourned to the upper chamber, where the following questions were put to the judges:

First—"Whether in their opinion, the court could enter into the evidence, or whether the sentence of the ecclesiastical court was final and conclusive?"

Secondly—"Whether the crown, or prosecutor, could or could not proceed against the prisoner in this court, for fraud and collusion in obtaining such sentence?"

The judges having answered that, "in both cases, the crown or the prosecutor were authorised by law to go into evidence in support of the indictment. The lord high-steward ordered the attorney-general to go on with the prosecution.

Mr. Attorney-general in opening the prosecution charged the prisoner with the highest aggravation of the offence, imputing the whole of her conduct to ambition and a lust of wealth, and doubting whether to the last, she determined in favour of one husband in preference of another, but as the option was most likely to administer to her love of dominion and her love of power.

He then stated the facts and aggravating circumstances which he was instructed to prove against her; and entered into a detail of the proceedings on the jactitation cause in the ecclesiastical court, which appeared truly disgraceful, and destitute of decency and equity.

Witnesses were now called upon to prove the prisoner's marriage with Mr. Hervey.—Ann Craddock deposed, that she knew Miss Chudleigh ever since the year 1742, when she came down upon a visit to Mr. Merrill's, at Launceston, in Hants; That she lived with Mrs. Hanmer, Miss Chudleigh's aunt, who was then at Mr. Merrill's; That Mr. Hervey saw Miss Chudleigh there, she believed for the first time, and they were privately married one evening about eleven o'clock, in the presence of her, Mrs. Mountney, Mrs. Hanmer, and the rev. Mr. Amos, the rector, who performed the ceremony; That she saw them put to bed together that night; That when Mr. Hervey returned from the Mediterranean they lived together; That the prisoner began to look very big, and that she told the witness, she had a little boy by Mr. Hervey, that was very like him.

Cæsar Hawkins proved the birth of a boy, which he supposed was the issue of Miss Chudleigh's marriage with Mr. Hervey; That Mr. Hervey desired him to wait upon her with proposals for a divorce, but she would not listen to any terms: but that afterwards she told him, she had instituted a jactitation suit against Mr. Hervey, and that at another time she expressed

expressed herself to be extremely unhappy, for that at Doctors Commons they had tendered her an oath, to swear she was not married, which she would not have taken for ten thousand worlds. That not long after upon another visit, she told him she had obtained a sentence that was irrevocable, unless in so many days Mr. Hervey took a proper mode to prevent it, which she did not think he would. On hearing this, the witness asked her, how she got over the oath? She replied, that the matter of the marriage was so blended with such a number of falsties, that she could easily reconcile it to her conscience, particularly as the ceremony was so shabby and scrambling a business that she might as safely swear she was not married as that she was.

Mr. Fettiplace—could only say, that as to the marriage of the Duchess of Kingston with Mr. Hervey, all that passed between the witness and the prisoner had been repeated among other topics of conversation, some years ago in Hampshire.

Lord Barrington being sworn, a long debate ensued with respect to his evidence, he thinking that he could not, as a man of honour, and as a man regardful of the laws of society, reveal private conversation; but this opinion was over-ruled, and Lord Radnor put the following question:

“Whether his lordship knows, from conversation with the lady at the bar, that she was married to the Earl of Bristol?”

His lordship answered—“The Duchess of Kingston, many (I should not say too many if I was to say thirty) years ago, did intrust me with a circumstance in her life relative to an engagement of a matrimonial kind with the Earl of Bristol, then Mr. Hervey. Whether it did amount to a marriage according to law; whether it was a good marriage or not; or whether there was any marriage at all I really cannot pretend to say. As far as my memory serves me with relation to what she was pleased to communicate to me, I should, from ignorance of law, and what is a good marriage in law, be doubtful. But the duchess did communicate to me, that a matrimonial engagement had passed between her and Mr. Hervey; but whether it amounted to a marriage or not, I am not lawyer or civilian enough to judge.”

Mrs. Philips who had been wife to the rev. Mr. Amos, the clergyman who performed the ceremony, proved that some time after the marriage, the prisoner came to her house, and asked her, if she could get her husband to give her a certificate of her marriage? shewing a piece of parchment written upon and stamped. That Mr. Merrill who was with her, said, she had better consult his attorney from Worcester, who accordingly was sent for, and advised a register-book to be bought, and for the minister to enter the marriage in that book along with some burials, and the entry was made.

The hand-writing of Mr. Amos and the Duke of Kingston's will were then proved, as also the marriage of the prisoner with his grace, was proved by the rev. Mess. Trebeck and Harper.

The evidence for the crown having closed, the prisoner was called upon to make her defence, which she read to their lordships, and was to the following purport.

It opened with observing that, “though her family were not ennobled it was as ancient and respectable a private family as any in the island. It stated a short genealogy, and recounted several services rendered by her ancestors to their king and country, particularly by Sir John Chudleigh, who distinguished himself in the civil wars.

“She informed their lordships that she was daughter of Colonel Chudleigh, and that when she came into public life to act for herself, she possessed the remnant of the ancient patrimony of her family.

“That early in life she entered into the service of her much honoured royal mistress, the late Princess Dowager of Wales, in which respectable situation she remained for upwards of twenty years.

“That

" That soon after her establishment in the princess's favour she became acquainted with Mr. Hervey, now Earl of Bristol ; and that in whatever nature her connection with that gentleman might appear to their lordships, she appealed to the Searcher of Hearts, that she was never satisfied in her own mind, either in respect of what happened then, or afterwards that it amounted to a marriage.

" That, being thus situated, and looking upon herself as a single woman, and the late Duke of Kingston, her dear lord, having paid his addresses to her as such, she first conceived thoughts of securing herself against any consequences that might follow from an engagement that she never thought binding in the sight either of God or man, to whose awful tribunal she now solemnly appealed to witness the truth of what she said.

" That, stimulated by the legitimate affection she had for the Duke of Kingston, she consented to institute a suit in the ecclesiastical court, where, after the fullest and most mature consideration of the most able civilians, men of the highest reputation in profession as counsel and advocates, or in their judicial capacity, her pretended marriage with Mr. Hervey was declared, by sentence of the ecclesiastical court, null and void.

" That, being determined to have every conscientious as well as legal sanction, she desired Dr. Collier, who was her advocate, before a licence was obtained, to lay the whole proceedings before the Archbishop of Canterbury, who was so kind and condescending as to promise that he would look over them, and give his opinion on the contents.

" That accordingly his grace, after looking over them, returned the papers to Doctor Collier, with the most decisive and unreserved assurance, that he thought she was at liberty to marry ; and that the sentence was supported upon grounds equally clear, legal, and conscientious.

" That in pursuance of his grace's opinion, he granted a special licence, and delivered it to Dr. Collier, for the marriage with her late husband the Duke of Kingston.

" That none of the circumstances, now related, were transacted in the dark ; but were known to her late husband, who was particularly informed of every step taken in the prosecution of the business from its first commencements, and of every previous matter on which the cause in the ecclesiastical court proceeded.

" That their present majesties, and her late royal mistress, the Princess Dowager of Wales, on her marriage, gave her every gracious mark of their favour and esteem, and publicly recognized her as Duchess of Kingston ; the latter being particularly acquainted with the circumstances of her private marriage with Mr. Hervey.

" Under such sanctions, such motives for the part she took, still strengthened by a sentence which had been looked upon as binding and conclusive, for upwards of seven centuries, if she erred, or their lordships should think she was guilty, on any rigid principle of law, which she trusted they would not, she hoped, nay she was certain, they would impute it to the mere effects of an erroneous judgment, proceeding from mistaken counsel and advice, and not to premeditated intention or guilt.

She then proceeded to justify her conduct during the life-time of the Duke of Kingston, while she was his wife ; and bestowed on his grace the most high and lavish encomiums.

She assured their lordships, that " he always behaved to her in the most tender and affectionate manner ; yet she solemnly affirmed, in the presence of Almighty God, that she never abused the ascendancy his love gave her over him, to base or improper purposes.

" That whatever marks of unbounded regard he had manifested for her in the distribution of his fortune, flowed spontaneously from himself ; and instead of urging him to the ample provision he had made for her in the event of his decease, it was she that refused to acquiesce in his first intention, that of making her the possessor of his whole fortune, without any reserve or subsequent devise over.

" That if she was guilty of avariciously engrossing every thing to herself, instead of enjoying her present fortune only for life, she could have had it in perpetuity, and have had it.

it in her power to have enriched her own family, to the utter disappointment and undoing of those, who, from motives which they ought to be ashamed of, were now persecuting her in the most violent and relentless manner.

"If, in the event of his decease, the duke had passed over his eldest nephew, in his will, it was not her fault. It was his nephew's own fault, who, by his disrespectful conduct to her had disobliged him; and it could hardly be imagined that she was displeased at a distribution which gave the preference to a person who had always continued to conduct himself towards her in a manner perfectly agreeable to what his grace was desirous of, that of paying her the respect and attention due to the relation she stood in, as being married to his uncle."

The witnesses on the part of the prisoner were now called; there were Mr. Berkley an attorney, and Mrs. Ann Pritchard, who gave in evidence, that Mrs. Craddock had told several persons, and among others the Earl of Bristol, when he was wanting evidence for a divorce, that she did not remember any thing of the marriage; and that she likewise declared she expected to be provided for in consequence of the present trial.

John Laroche confirmed that part of the prisoner's defence, in which she asserted, that both the Duke of Kingston and herself acted by advice of counsel, and particularly of Doctor Collier.

The solicitor-general concisely observed, that the several facts stated by his learned leader on his opening upon the indictment on Friday last, had, he trusted, been fully proved by the witnesses who had been called on the part of the prosecution; and as the evidence adduced by the counsel for the prisoner, had by no means invalidated a single circumstance alledged by those who gave their evidence on Friday and Saturday, he thought it unnecessary to trouble their lordships any further, but submitted the whole to them, relying with perfect confidence on their known wisdom and honour, which would necessarily incline them to give just and impartial verdict.

The lords having adjourned to the upper chamber, lord Mansfield then moved, that the following question be put by the Lord High Steward to every peer in the court:

"Is the prisoner *Guilty* of the felony whereof she stands indicted, or *Not Guilty*?"

Their lordships immediately returned to the court, when the Lord High Steward said, "their lordships had determined that he should question each peer as to his opinion, in court, in the absence of the prisoner, beginning with the junior baron; and having gone through the peerage, should call the prisoner into court, and inform her of the determination of their lordships." He accordingly began thus:

"John Lord Sundridge; how says your lordship, is the prisoner Guilty of the Felony whereof she stands indicted, or Not Guilty?"

To which his lordship replied,

"Guilty, upon my honour."

To the same question all the peers replied in the same words, except the Duke of Newcastle, who said,

"Guilty erroneously, but not intentionally, upon my honour."

The prisoner was then called in, and the Lord High Steward told her, that their lordships had heard the arguments of the counsel on both sides, and the facts alledged against her; that they had considered the whole, and had found her Guilty of the Felony whereof she stood indicted; he desired therefore to know what she had to offer, that judgment should not be pronounced against her.

She delivered a paper, which was handed to the clerk, and read at the table: the words of it were these,

"I pray the benefit of the peerage agreeable to the statute."

To this the attorney general strongly objected, and the prisoners counsel replied. Mr. Attorney General asserted, that only peers in parliament were entitled to their privilege on such occasions. Her counsel alledged, that it was unjust to inflict a more cruel and severe

punishment on the prisoner, than on a man convicted of the same offence, merely because she was a woman.

The Lord High Steward adjourned the court to the chamber of parliament, where Lord Camden and Lord Mansfield-both spoke upon the subject, and it was settled that the prisoner's prayer should be granted. Their lordships then returned to the court, where the Lord High Steward told the prisoner, that "their lordships had deliberated on what had been urged by the counsel, and had agreed to indulge her with the privilege she prayed for. Little or no punishment could therefore now be inflicted on her, but that the feelings of her own conscience would supply that defect; and as a further piece of advice, he had to inform her, that if she was *hereafter convicted of any clerigible offence*, she must not again expect the indulgence she had now received; but that which was only clerigible in another, would be a capital offence in her. She might now be discharged on paying her fees."

Thus ended a prosecution of infinite magnitude, both in respect to the convict, and the ecclesiastical court, which now by the judgment of the lords, in this cause, has been taught to feel and acknowledge the superior jurisdiction and controlling power of the common law of England. But though shame and ignominy were brought upon the duchess, and public justice vindicated, her private enemies received no benefit, his Grace of Kingston's will having been drawn up with such legal caution, that notwithstanding the law had declared her second marriage void, she continued to enjoy, for her life, the great revenues left her by his grace; and Mr. Evelyn Meadows found himself ruined by the immense expence of the prosecution.

The legal proceedings against the Countess of Bristol, for to this title she was reduced, from that of Duchess of Kingston, by her conviction, did not terminate with the trial before the lords. Her fortune still remained; her first husband was still alive; and the prosecutors, stimulated by disappointment, took fresh measures against her.

To restrain her from leaving the kingdom, was now a material object: her personal property was great; and to wrest it from her, by forcing her to reside in England, application was made for a writ of *ne exeat regno*; but happily for her ladyship, she received information of the proceeding; and being advised instantly to leave the kingdom, she ordered her carriage to be drove about the streets, with a confidential servant in it; and having sent cards of invitation for a party to dine at Kingston-house, her design being thus covered, she threw herself into a hired post-chaise, which waited for her in the vicinage of town, and drove off with the utmost expedition for Dover, where she met Mr. Harding, who directly conveyed her to Calais in an open boat, hired suddenly for the purpose.

An account of her conviction had reached France before her; and on her arrival at Monsieur Dessen's hotel, she experienced its effects. The sycophant received her with the coolest politeness; he grinned; he shrugged his shoulders; and by various gesticulation and distortions of face and limb, expressed his condolence for the misfortunes of his guest. But what distressed him most, was his inability to accommodate her with a suit of rooms; alas, his whole house was occupied; and it was with the utmost difficulty he could procure her a single chamber.

The countess, tortured as she was, in body and mind, from the fatigue that both had recently experienced, did not see into the cause of her host's apologies, so gladly accepted of any place to rest her wearied limbs, and compose her thoughts.—Dessen, on the instant of her retirement, proceeded to an investigation of her finances, and finding that the loss of her revenues, was not as he suspected, a consequence of her disgrace, in the morning after arrival, assured her with joy in his countenance, that by great exertions, he had prevailed on his other guests to sacrifice their convenience to a person of her dignity, and that the best suit of rooms in the hotel were devoted to her *grace's* service.

Monfieur

Monfieur Delfein, poffeffes in an eminent degree the art of extortion, which however he difguifes, by the affumption of the moft profound refpect, fubmiffive hypocrify, and falacious politeneff. By his ingratiating meannefs he compleatly impofed upon the credulity of his noble gueft, a circumftance which may be confidered as an undoubted proof of his great genius in circumventing, as it muft be allowed that her ladyfhip poffeffed an eminent talent at chicane, and powerful fubtlety, in diving by the help of infinuation into the hearts of thofe whom fhe had occafion to dupe; yet, notwithstanding thefe qualities and her avarice, the wily Frenchman circumvented her out of the loan of a thoufand pounds, and, when her debtor, by continually complaining of her parfimony and other fpecies of ill uſage, rendered his hotel in every refpect difagreeable.

Forefeeing ſhe ſhould have frequent occaſion to viſit Calais, and being thus tormented by an impudent exorbitant hoſt, ſhe reſolved on taking a permanent refidence, and applied to Monfieur Cocove, who at that time, with a wife and fix gentlemen, occupied a houſe in the city.

Monfieur Cocove had refided for ſome time in England, where he had lived with perſons of the firſt faſhion. The brave Marquis of Granby had been his intimate friend, and from a congenial diſpoſition with the Engliſh, he had acquired a conſiderable ſhare of their manners, affected their habits, and bore a ſtrong reſemblance to them in his perſonal appearance.

His circumſtances however were reduced. He had loſt a poſt which he had held under government, and when the duchefs arrived at Calais, he lived ſequeſtered on a ſmall paternal eſtate, ſituated within a few miles of that city, to which he was reſtricted on account of his debts, as is cuſtomary in France.

This gentleman's houſe Lady Briſtol purchaſed for one thouſand pounds, the proprietor reſerving for the uſe of himſelf and family one ſide of the quadrangle. She had no ſooner taken poſſeſſion than ſhe commenced alterations, and among what ſhe termed her improvements, built a room with a bow window, over a ditch as filthy as a common ſewer, and which had in proſpect the rear of the privies belonging to the barrack. In point of furniture, this room was as remarkable as for ſituation, there being no chairs for the accomodation of her viſitors: ſhe called it her ſtanding ſaloon.

To the Cocove family, Lady Briſtol was extremely liberal in promiſes: the expectations of the girls ſhe raiſed by a diſplay of her jewels and wardrobe, vowing to make proviſion for them all. She knew the influence of vanity in a female breaſt, and encouraged theſe young creatures to hope for every thing that liberality could beſtow; in ſhort, they poſſeſſed her diamonds by anticipation. The boys ſhe gained to her intereſt, by flattering their ambition. The French King ſhe deſcribed to be her friend; he could deny her nothing that ſhe could in reaſon demand, and ſhe would ſolicit commiſſions for them all.—Further ſhe would inſinuate, that the grand monarque was her debtor. She ſpent her fortune in his country, though her intimate friend, the King of Pruffia, was eternally preſſing her with invitations to reſide in his dominions. Thus did ſhe dupe the family of Cocove, for whom ſhe had no more friendship than for the family of the Great Mogul; and thus did ſhe expreſs her veneration and attachment for King Lewis, for whom ſhe had no more regard, than ſhe would have ſhewn to the Cham of Tartary, had ſhe fled to his dominions for protection.

While the counteſs thus amused herſelf at Calais, the Earl of Briſtol was not idle in London. His lordſhip determined on eſtabliſhing his marriage; but for what motive never tranſpired. Her fortune was great, but it was the bounty of the Duke of Kingſton's love and weakneſs; and, it cannot be preſumed, that a nobleman of England would have a view to enjoy the price of his wife's prostitution: it may therefore be ſuppoſed, that the ſuit which he now commenced againſt his lady, was for the purpoſe of obtaining ſufficient evidence to ſecure him a divorce.

On the 14th of July 1776, Doctor Marriot made a motion in the Commons to the following purport—"That the court ſhould decree a citation to be fixed on the Royal Exchange,

change, for the countess, to appear and shew cause, why the sentence pronounced against the earl, should not be declared null and void, as his lordship is now able to prove his marriage."

The judge at first refused to grant the motion, but after very long and forcible arguments from Lord Bristol's advocates, none appearing for the countess, he changed his opinion and decreed the citation to issue as prayed, observing all due forms as in case of a peeress.

This cause, however, never proceeded to effect; the lady was served with a process, but the Earl of Bristol soon after dying, she was freed from any apprehension of legal molestation on his account.

Her ladyship had not been long settled at Calais, when an express called upon her to revisit Rome. On leaving that city, she had deposited her plate in the public bank; but had left in her house a renegade friar from Spain, and an English girl, whom she had carried with her from England on her last expedition.

This girl, though young, was prudent, and had early imbibed a strong prejudice against foreigners. In appearance she was handsome, rosy and plump, with high spirits and good humour, which qualities had so forcibly attracted the admiration of a cardinal, that he offered to barter his church treasure for her freshness! The visits of his eminence at her grace's palace were frequent. Every day he found particular reasons for inquiring after her return, and on those occasions took every opportunity of ruining the virtue of the English domestic.

The friar had a penetrating mind, that soon discovered the motives of his grace's solicitude; and the cardinal rightly construed the cautious attention of the friar into jealousy; while the poor girl easily perceived that both had a design on her chastity, yet was so situated, she could neither drive them from the palace, nor quit it herself without a breach of trust to her employer, by leaving her effects liable to plunder.

The friar was sufficiently proficient in English, to make himself understood in common conversation, whereas his rival being totally ignorant of that language could only carry on his amour by gestures: this gave the friar a considerable advantage, he being able not only to insinuate his suit into the heart of his mistress by subtlety, but by the same medium, to represent the dignified pillar of the church in such odious colours as not only disgusted, but terrified the object of their wishes, who, whenever he made his appearance, concealed herself, and left the friar to entertain him.

The friar by these means being freed from the interruption of the cardinal, soon argued down the virtue and prejudices of the girl, and notwithstanding his vow of celibacy, convinced her that *nature must prevail* over doctrine and discipline, and having subdued her person to the gratification of his sensuality, he further converted her into an instrument for administering to his avarice; for in her presence, and without objection, she permitted his reverence to convey from the palace every portable article of value which he exchanged into cash, leaving his proselyte to bewail her weakness, and experience those pains which were entailed upon the female race of Eve for her first transgression, and which, in a few weeks produced a living witness to shew, by incontrovertible proof, that the spiritual father was also a father of the flesh, and in every respect a man for the ladies.

It was an account of this robbery, by the son of the church, that induced Lady Bristol to undertake a journey to Rome, and not what she industriously reported, a pressing invitation from the triple crowned potentate, his holiness the pope; her journey, however, was impeded by a slight illness which seized her on the road, and which was the only extraordinary occurrence of the journey.

Her arrival being announced, cardinal Albani immediately waited on her, to whom she communicated the particulars of the friar's conduct, cunningly suppressing every circumstance that related to the hot-blooded cardinal and her maid; for the sufferings of the poor girl were no object in her mind, which was seldom agitated by the impulses of charity, and which, when property or gain were in view, never admitted the intrusion of any other consideration.

The

The deluded domestic being questioned fell on her knees—She charged the friar with opening her chamber door and obtaining his ends by force—the lady answered what's that to me—you let him force open my *escrutoir*—"Alas," said the girl, "I was naked and in bed"—"My linen is all gone!" exclaimed the lady—"Pity my condition," said the maid—"I have lost my candlesticks," cried the lady—"That infernal friar," said the poor girl, sobbing, "has robbed the palace, by the living God!" ejaculated the lady—and, bursting into tears, lamented in terms the most pathetic, at which even the heart of the friar would have relented, the loss of a *diamond buckle*, left her by her dear duke—then bursting into rage, like Shylock, wishes him confined before her, and her jewels at his feet; but while in this convulsion of anger roaring for her stones—railing at the friar, and vowing vengeance against her domestic—a messenger being announced from his holiness—her bosom calmed—she retired to meet him, and left her pregnant maid to think on what had passed, and sigh alone—

The message was of condolence—

"What I have lost by the friar, Sir," said the Countess of Bristol to his holiness's gentleman, "is certainly of very considerable value; but virtue, Sir, is above all price; and his villany in taking advantage of the weakness of an innocent creature, is the cause of my distress—my jewels may be replaced; but her chastity, Sir! My noble lord bequeathed me a princely revenue, and I wish to make others happy with it—My unfortunate servant I took when a child, and meant to provide for her like a mother," then flew out a string of moral reflection on the wickedness of the holy father, which were followed by dutiful respects to the pope, and a short dissertation on charity, in which she touched upon the *persecution* against herself in England—accused her enemies of perjury—expatiated on resignation to the divine dispensations of providence; and, having dispatched the messenger, returned to her deluded domestic in as high a passion as she left her, swearing if she did not find the friar she would have her put to death by torture as an accomplice.

Non est inventus being returned to every inquiry after the friar, and *nulla bona* to every inquiry after the effects, the lady turned her mind to another object, which was to get her plate out of the public bank; and succeeding in this she returned to Calais—to tell the friar's tale, by which she often, without perceiving it raised a considerable laugh against herself.

The daily communication from Dover to Calais determined Lady Bristol to continue in that city till her apprehensions on the validity of the Duke of Kingston's will were entirely satisfied. On this account she had nothing to apprehend; but the excluded nephew of his grace resolved to try the question, though without a probability of success. This kept alive her terrors, and while they lasted her ladyship continued under a veil of hypocrisy to pretend a friendship to several persons in England, whom she found necessary agents and communicative correspondents.

Among these duped confidentials were the late Sir George Hay, at that time dean of the arches, a man of deep legal knowledge and splendid abilities; and Doctor Isaac Schomberg, his intimate friend. The opinions of Sir George were frequently wanted by Lady Bristol, as many questions arose on the duke's will. These opinions were procured by Schomberg, and one was, that the will was as safe from attack as the rock of Gibraltar.

For this consolatory assurance her ladyship returned thanks to Schomberg, in language of the warmest gratitude, accompanied with a present of a deep blue stone ring brilliantly encompassed, and bearing as a motto "*Pour l' Amitie.*" Schomberg constantly displayed his ring, and proclaimed the munificence of the donor; but one of the stones unfortunately falling out, it was necessary to have it replaced by a jeweller—The jeweller viewed the ring, smiled and said—"It is really not worth your while, Sir, to have any thing done to this ring, the stones are compositions, and it did not cost more in Paris than thirty-six shillings."—

"Then I'll dispose of it," answered the doctor—so first crushing it under his feet he then threw its shattered remains out of the window.

Lady Bristol's mind being now freed from the terrors of losing her fortune, bequeathed her by her dear lord; resolved on changing the scene of her residence, by leaving the foul air that arose from the barrack privies at the rear of her house in Calais, and breathing the pure atmosphere of Petersburg.

She had formed a design to visit the court of Russia, some time previous to her trial, and for that purpose had built a ship with very splendid accommodations. There was a drawing-room, dining-room, kitchen and bed-rooms, and every convenience to be found in a suit of family chambers.

This ship attracted the observation of all ranks, it was a curiosity worth inspection, and the Russian ambassador, who had seen it, being informed that the lady had built it for the purpose of being conveyed on a visit to the Empress of Russia, he assured her in the name of the great Catharine, that her reception at the court of Petersburg would be most gracious.

Previous to her voyage, however, Lady Bristol took prudential measures to insure the friendship of the empress. She had got possession of some valuable paintings by the death of the Duke of Kingston; and these, though they should have descended as heir-looms to the estate, she resolved upon presenting to the empress. Her ladyship had no objection to be generous at the expence of justice, though she was never found so when called upon by gratitude or charity, and as she could not convert these paintings into cash, without incurring a charge of meanness and dishonesty; she appropriated them to the service of her vanity and ambition, with a probable view that even her avarice would be, in some degree, satisfied by a return worthy the elevated situation of the empress.

The pictures being accepted by the empress, were shipped for Petersburg, with several other articles of great value. They arrived safe, were received with joy, and a formal message of thanks being dispatched to the ambassador, he delivered it with every possible mark of respect to her ladyship, who now commenced preparations for her northern journey.

Her ship having been ordered round to Calais, Harding, the captain of her yacht, was appointed to the command, and in that capacity engaged proper lands for the navigation, and laid in necessary stores; but when every thing was nearly ready an impediment to the voyage was started of a very serious nature.

At that time England being at war with America the seas swarmed with privateers, commissioned by the United States, and many captures had been made; it therefore became an object to Lady Bristol to obtain a protection, not only for her ship and its contents, but also for herself, her officers and her crew. To secure safe conduct she dispatched an epistle to the French minister at Paris, stating her situation, and praying for protection under the colours of France.

The minister having complied and sent necessary directions to Calais, Captain Harding was informed that a French flag was to be hoisted on board his ship, and that the crew were to be French sailors, on which this loyal soul, who had distinguished himself by bravery in the British navy, strongly objected to the measure, but by the soothing arguments of the Countess, who represented her voyage as being merely a trip of pleasure, in which neither honour nor allegiance were concerned, he was persuaded to continue in his station.

Another obstacle now arose. The French sailors being engaged, and paid part of their wages in advance, positively refused to serve under an Englishman, and left no alternative but to appoint a French commander. A fellow, named La Fevre, master of a fishing smack, offered his services, which being accepted, Harding was dismissed, and retired to his family at Dover. This honest creature felt the insult of his dismissal with insupportable sensibility; it wounded his heart to be thus treated after a series of faithful and laborious services; and he actually died of a broken heart.

Lady Bristol, exclusive of her menial domestics, selected several persons for the purpose of attending her on her voyage, in the different stations applicable to a suit, and proper to give credit to a duchess of the first eminence, about to make an ostentatious visit to so exalted a personage as a sovereign princess. The characters

characters which composed this train of attendants were truly motly in manners, dress, and dispositions: never was there such an exhibition of personages! The French sailors being Roman catholics, insisted on having a priest to say mass, for the welfare of their souls, and Monsieur L'Abbe Sechand being recommended to the appointment of chaplain to the crew, by a lady in Paris, set out in the diligence for Calais, where he arrived without any incumbrance of baggage, except his violin, which was the constant companion of his leisure hours. The Abbe, on his arrival, experienced a warm reception. His patroness had been lavish in his praise before she saw him; but being rather disappointed by his shabby appearance, for the Abbe though not of the mendicant order, was in habit mean as a beggar, replenished his purse with money to clothe his back; and he embarked on board with a complete paraphernalia for the altar, new vestment for his sacerdotal function, and a heart elated by his good fortune.

The lady, however, to avoid the suspicion of apostasy from the religion of her forefathers, retained a protestant chaplain in her service, for the special purpose of administering grace and comfort to her spiritual necessities and intellectual callings. This gentleman was the Reverend Mr. Foster, long known to her ladyship; and between whom and the French Abbe, it does not appear that any dispute ever arose about religion, the one suffering the seamen to go on in their way towards salvation, and the other never attempting the work of conversion on the lady. The coachman and footman were also taken on board, and her ladyship having embarked, a fair wind wafted her to Elsinour, in twelve days, where after refreshing for as short a time as circumstances would admit, she pursued her voyage and arrived safe at Petersburg.

At the time of her ladyship's arrival, the empress was residing at a private palace in the country, to which she often retired, to enjoy, without interruption, the conversation of a select party. The empress, however, though attached to public form, on this occasion dispensed with court ceremonies, and a carriage and equipage was sent for her guest, whom she indulged with the honour of an immediate interview. The meeting produced a scene unusual to the Muscovites. Lady Bristol knelt, on her first appearance, before the empress, who instantly held out her hand, assisted in raising her, and an affectionate embrace followed.

The arrival of an English woman of distinction, at Petersburg, was a novelty that roused curiosity; and wherever the adventures appeared, she was followed by a croud of gazers. This flattered her vanity to the utmost; and the further favours conferred by the empress fed her ambition with hopes of attaining the implicit confidence of that princess. These favours were of a distinguishing nature: a mansion was appointed for her; the vessel that brought her to Petersburg was ordered under government's care, and damages, which it received from a hurricane, were repaired at the public expence; in short, the marks of distinction she received, not only from the empress, but the Russian nobility, must have satisfied any mind of stability; but her thoughts were always wavering after variety, and wandering after change; and a single circumstance rendered her situation at Petersburg unhappy.

The English ambassador considered her a reprobated character at home, and refused her the respect she claimed abroad. He would not admit of her assumed title of duchess; and she could never prevail on him to pay her even marks of common complaisance, except in private. This produced in her mind an insupportable mortification; she therefore began to inquire, whether possessions in the country might not ensure to her that respect which as an alien she could not attain by right. In Russia there is an order of ladies, distinguished by an insignia, the principal ornament of which is a picture of the empress. Admission into this order gains precedence and privileges of honour and respect. Lady Bristol was imposed on to believe, that by purchasing an estate, she might obtain the order; and considering herself certain of the empress's interest, she laid out twelve thousand pounds in land, bestowing on it the name of Chudleigh. Thus endowed, she exerted her interest to obtain the honour she panted after; but the answer to her application, for ever blasted her hopes. She was informed it was an invariable and indispensable rule, never to admit foreigners into the order. What an humiliating stroke on her ladyship's avarice, as well as her vanity, pride and ambition! she had laid out twelve thousand pounds on an uncultivated estate, which produced nothing but wood and water, fish and fowl! What was to be done? Lady Bristol was again to be duped: she suffered herself to be persuaded that on this estate immense wealth might be raised by distilling brandy, and she was called upon to disburse large sums for the erection of necessary works, and the purchase of utensils. What a falling off was here! A candidate for the first honour in a state degenerating into a distiller of spirits!

Thus disappointed in her views, her ladyship felt awkward and chagrined; the ambassador's conduct particularly hurt her mind, by shewing at the court of Petersburg, the wretched estimation in which she was held by the court of Great Britain; and though her transgression in marrying a second husband, while the first was living, did not, perhaps, injure her in the opinion of the royal Katherine, yet among the wives of the Russian nobility, several considered the offence, scandalous, immoral and irreligious. Her ladyship felt the mortification of hearing that the different transactions of her life had become subjects of conversation, and were generally censured. These reasons, joined to the disappointment her pride had experienced from

from the empress's refusing her the order, and the suffering of her purse from her purchase of land, and dissipation scheme, determined her to leave Petersburg, and revisit Calais. There were other reasons also of a private nature, which redound as little to her credit as any part of her public conduct.

The members of her household began to feel extremely uneasy from their different situations. Mr. Foster, her ladyship's chaplain, was a scholar and a gentleman. His allowance was but one hundred pounds a year; this being in arrears, the good lady quarrelled with her spiritual pastor for a trifle, and for which he left her ladyship with this laconic observation, in retort on her calling him old, "*I am old, but not mean*;" and the empress being informed of his situation, sent for him and offered him an honourable retreat and provision for life, which benignity the countess felt, as sordid minds always feel when generosity shews them an example they are incapable of following—but besides, Mr. Foster had it in his power to represent his old mistress to his new one in such colours as must render her odious.

The French Abbé also became extremely troublesome. The promises made him were many and liberal, the performances very few and scarcely worth acceptance. He had at first looked upon his appointment as a certain and warm provision for life, he now found it casual and slender. His salary being in arrears was formally demanded, but a satisfactory settlement could not be obtained. Agents were appointed on each side but without effect, and the ecclesiastic was left to seek his redress in France, with scarce a louis in his pocket to bear his expences from Petersburg.

Her ladyship had appointed an English carpenter steward of her household, to whom, on her leaving Petersburg, she gave the direction of her affairs. At her brandy estate of Chudleigh, she left a domestic of a similar description; and, on her route to Calais, she picked up an itinerant colonel in the imperial service, whom she entertained as a companion. The colonel had a wife and several children at Vienna, whom, however, he did not appear in any great haste to visit; for after obtaining the confidence of his newly acquired female acquaintance, he took French leave of her, taking a gold watch as a kind remembrance of the pleasant minutes he had passed in her company, and two beautiful rings as emblems of those brilliant eyes he had so much admired for their languish and sparkle.



TO THE PUBLIC.

OCTOBER 1, 1788.

It was the intention of the Editor to have given the Duchess of Kingston's life entire, but having promised the publication of it for this day, the demand being great, and a considerable quantity of original and curious information having been sent late, he intends to give the concluding part in a few days, printed on the same paper and with the same type as the first, for which sixpence only will be charged. He can assure the public that the documents from which this Life of the Duchess has been written are authentic, and that it is out of the power of any other person to publish them, unless they plagiarise from the present work.

